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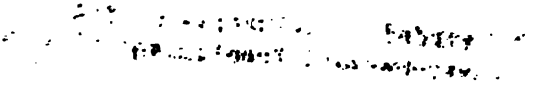

HAMILTON'S WORKS.

VOL. VI.

THE WORKS

OF

ALEXANDER HAMILTON;

COMPRISING

HIS CORRESPONDENCE,

AND

HIS POLITICAL AND OFFICIAL WRITINGS,

EXCLUSIVE OF THE FEDERALIST,

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JOHN C. HAMILTON,

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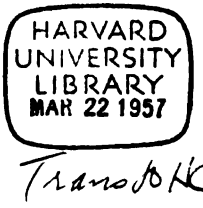

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CORRESPONDENCE.

BRADFORD TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 21, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you very sincerely for your letter of the 10th instant, which I received a few days ago. The conduct of Fauchet, which you so justly reprobate, could not escape the notice of the President, though it does not seem to have excited so much public attention as I expected. A little before this took place, that minister had intimated to Mr. Randolph his expectation of returning soon to France—and Mr. Monroe's letters gave reason to expect that Mr. Adet was on his way to America to succeed him. Mr. Randolph, therefore, thought it would be sufficient to communicate to his successor, either at the first interview or immediately after, the sense of the government on this subject. If such gross improprieties could have been suppressed for the future, without any new irritation to Fauchet, who has been extremely soured of late, and is disposed, I suspect, to do us mischief on his return, it would have been desirable, and perhaps the best course; but as we hear nothing more of Adet, and this man is evidently endeavoring to stimulate the party which is opposed to the treaty, the march you intimate would not have been amiss. I showed your letter to the Secretary of State; but his censure of Fauchet outran yours:—and he means that he shall learn through his successor the sentiments which are entertained

of his behavior. As no letter can be given him at his departure, he will, at least, gather it from that circumstance. He finds great fault with Mr. Randolph of late, and I understand has had the effrontery to complain "that he did not show him the whole of the instructions to Mr. Jay; and that he did not inform him that Mr. Jay was authorized to conclude a commercial treaty." On the subject of that treaty he is extremely irritable, and from various circumstances I have reason to believe that the pieces signed Franklin, which are directed against our having any connection with Great Britain, are written under his direction, but it is impossible to prove that the fact is so. I am persuaded no means will be left untried to induce the Senate to reject the treaty, and I sincerely hope Mr. Jay will arrive before the discussion commences. The trial of the insurgents has commenced. Mr. Rawle selected what he thought a pretty strong case; but his principal witness proved recreant, and flatly contradicted what his deposition contained. The prisoner was of course acquitted without argument, and on application of the district attorney, the witness, Major Parker, (you may recollect him, perhaps; a tall, red-haired, snuff-taking fellow,) was bound in recognizance to take his trial for the perjury. The trials of several others have been put off on affidavits of the absence of material witnesses, the Court being of opinion "that they were entitled to a reasonable time to collect their evidence after the list of the United States witnesses is furnished." This creates not a little embarrassment, and their counsel will in future try the prisoners in such order as best suits their own views. Adieu.

Believe me, very truly and affectionately,

W. BRADFORD.

RUTLEDGE TO HAMILTON.

CHARLESTON, May 27th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The cause of the heirs of General S. Harris and Blackford has been decided, and we have lost it. The argument lasted for

three days—and I exerted every faculty in favor of our friends, but it was all in vain; and we shall have the enormous sum of £11,000 sterling to pay in this unfortunate business. Mrs. Greene (as well she might) relies implicitly on your friendship for assistance. She means to make an application to Congress for relief, and is sanguine in her expectations. The delegates from this State in the Senate have *offered* her their best services; and she feels a pleasure in observing that most of her enemies are out of Congress—and that their places have been supplied by better men. Mr. Warrington, the agent of Harris and Blackford, has acted from the beginning to the end of the affair with uncommon humanity and kindness. His success has not damped his virtues—and he is now as willing to oblige as ever he was. Mrs. Greene thinks his testimony may be of considerable importance. He was one of those whose debts the General originally guarantied; was privy to all the transactions, and is able and willing to speak with great clearness on the subject. He knew the motives by which our friend was actuated—he will bear witness to the patriotic principles which gave rise to all his honorable embarrassments—embarrassments, my dear sir, which were too mighty for his independent spirit; and which, in a luckless moment, bereaved his country of one of her brightest ornaments.

As you are not only perfect master of the subject, but know full well the precise objections which were made to the relief solicited by Mrs. Green, I thought it best to place Mr. Warrington in your hands, that you may obtain from him such testimony as shall be sufficient to remove every doubt with respect to the fairness of the General's conduct. This business, happily terminated, will leave the family in the enjoyment of a very considerable estate, and add to the catalogue of services which she has received from your disinterested friendship.

I am, dear Sir, with much esteem and respect,

Your very humble servant,

ED. RUTLEDGE.

Mrs. Rutledge, who was once known to you and to Mrs. Hamilton, desires me to say that she has not lost the remem-

brance of your friendly attentions, and hopes she still holds a place in the esteem of those whom she highly values. She congratulates Mrs. H. on your return to private life, and wishes you may reap your full share of the golden harvest.

WILHEM JAN WILLINK TO HAMILTON.

AMSTERDAM June 1st, 1795.

SIR:

With heartfelt satisfaction and gratitude did we receive your esteemed favor of the 31st January.

That one of your last ministerial acts should have been to testify the sense you entertain of the zeal and fidelity we have invariably exerted to promote the interests of the United States committed to our management, is the most flattering and honorable recompense that could be bestowed upon us; and we assure you we highly cherish it as such.

The success of those efforts you have been pleased to deem meritorious in us, have been greatly facilitated by the unlimited confidence we have had in your abilities, probity, and zeal for the support of the honor of your country, and the credit of its government, which have enabled us most boldly and conscientiously, as well to our dearest relations and nearest friends, as to the most indifferent money-lenders, to recommend the investment of their capitals in bonds of the United States preferably to those of any European power whatever—an advice we now experience the pleasure to be sincerely thanked for.

We are happy to learn from you the character of your successor. Your testimony of him cannot fail to secure him our full confidence, and we shall not be wanting in our duty to inculcate the same when it may be necessary or useful.

Allow us, in taking leave of you, sir, in your official capacity, to return you our most unfeigned thanks for the confidence you have constantly shown us, and for the polite attention you

have ever paid to all our advices and recommendations. Be assured, sir, they have made an indelible impression on our hearts, and that none of your friends can wish you more happiness and felicity in your retreat than we do, nor be more desirous to promote them than we are by any agreeable offices or services it may be in our power to render you.

Entreating you most earnestly and sincerely, as a proof of your regard and friendship for us—not to spare us, but, on the contrary, freely to apply to us on all such occasions.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, June 11th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter of the 10th. The case has been with me as with you. Reflection has not mitigated the exceptionable point. Yet it will be to be lamented, if no mode can be devised to save the main object and close the irritable questions which are provided for. Every thing besides an absolute and simple ratification will put something in jeopardy. But, while on the one hand I think it advisable to hazard as little as possible—on the other I should be willing to hazard something, and unwilling to see a very objectionable principle put into activity.

It is to be observed that no time is fixed for the ratification of the treaty. It may then be ratified with a collateral instruction to make a declaration, that the United States consider the article in question, aggregately taken, as intended by the king of Great Britain as a privilege; that they conceive it for their interest to forbear the exercise of that privilege with the condition annexed to it, till an explanation in order to a new modification of it shall place it on a more acceptable footing, or till an article to be sent to our minister containing that modification shall be agreed upon between him and the British court as a part of the treaty—the ratification not to be exchanged without further instruction from

this country, unless accepted in this sense and with this qualification.

This course appears to me preferable to sending back the treaty to open the negotiation anew, because it may save time on the points most interesting to us, and I do not see that if the ratifications be exchanged with this saving, there can be any doubt of the matter operating as intended. Adieu.

Yours truly.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, June 20th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

A considerable alarm has been spread this morning by a report that the treaty had been disagreed to. I have assured those I have seen, that I was convinced any rumor of a decision must be premature. The anxiety, however, about the result, is extreme. The common opinion among men of business of all descriptions is, that a disagreement to the treaty would greatly shock and stagnate pecuniary plans and operations in general. This is not a small source of disquietude. Others who are not likely to be affected in that sense (and among these myself), look forward to the result with great solicitude, as fixing or endangering the stability of our present beneficial and desirable situation.

My influence in seconding the wishes of our friend General Greene, is, I fear, overrated. Unwilling to raise expectation which may not be realized, I will only say, that it will give me real pleasure to be able to promote his accommodation or advantage, as my opinion of him entirely corresponds with yours. In the mean time, I will, as far as circumstances permit, have an eye to the affair.

Yours affectionately.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 18th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letters of June 13th and 15th, for which I thank you, and I inclose the statement you desire.

I had in season taken measures for reviving our debt or loan in Amsterdam. The plan is to surrender the existing obligations to the commissioners, who, in lieu thereof, issue triplicate descriptive certificates to the creditors; any one, being produced at the Treasury, will command the new stock. The certificates are not transferable, to prevent fraud and insecurity in the transmission. The old bonds are to be cancelled and delivered to our minister, who is to possess a control over the whole business.

A similar plan has been adopted for Antwerp, which I expect will be conducted by Mr. De Wolfe, under the eye of Mr. Adams, jr., the secretary of the minister.

Some of our creditors have, doubtless, emigrated, and may be unable to comply with the proposed form. Mr. Cazenove has suggested the expediency of advertising that the original bonds will be received at the Treasury. This may be necessary; yet, as the bonds must be verified here, a very inconvenient delay or great risk must be incurred. Will you favor me with your opinion on the point?

The French debt has been finally settled, and the balance issued in stock to James Swan, agent to the Republic, pursuant to an authority from the Committee of Public Safety.

This Mr. Swan has proposed to me to contract to pay our interest in specie in Holland, and when done, to receive payment here at par. He has immense funds at command here, and, *as he says*, in France. His *ability* cannot be doubted. All the objections which exist will occur to you. Supposing I contract with him, and at the same time authorize our commissioners to draw on the treasury if he fails to comply, will the provisions be adequate, or what better can be done? The shipment of produce is

impracticable. The French agents command every thing; and the risk and probable loss would be immense. On this point will you drop me a line soon.

The 500,000 dollars you sent, arrived in London the latter part of April; this was in season if my subsequent remittance went safe, and the stock would sell. The principal, interest and instalments, were paid punctually.

I must soon decide upon some plan for paying all our domestic debt under the law of the last session. Several questions arise.

1st—Is it best to declare by a public act that the payments will be made, and to state the mode throughout, or only that a payment will be made next December?

2d—If a declaration is to be made, in what manner, and by what officer should it be made?

3d—What distribution of the annual 8 per cent. for principal and interest will be proper in the several years, to avoid too minute fractions, and essentially to comply with the law? The inclosed table in the columns marked A and B, exhibits the most exact scale which can be adopted in practice; and the columns C and D, the true distribution on the principles of the law. Is it a matter of discretion, after the year 1807, to divide 1 per cent. for three-quarters of a year, and 5 per cent. at the close of the year? This distribution would be most convenient in practice, and most satisfactory to the creditors. The fractional dividends after that time, on small sums of capital, would not be worth attention.

4th—Does it not result from the general spirit of the act of the last session, and from the express authority to borrow (*for interest*) in the first section, that the payments of *interest* as well as principal are to be made under the management of the trustees of the sinking fund? And is not this idea fortified by the necessity which exists of blending a portion of the payments of *principal* in the dividends of *interest?*

5th—What is it the duty of the secretary to do in respect to the *vested* and *appropriated* funds—that is, is he to separate them from the treasury when wanted? or, is he to carry them by

warrant to a distinct account, as they *accrue in the treasury?* The former mode is justified by practice, and understood by the Legislature. The latter is the most efficient mode, by preventing a competition with the demands for the current service, and by compelling an adequate revenue establishment.

6th—If I am obliged to recur to new loans, will it be best to make an arrangement by which the bank shall be the organ of the sales of stock for the public? or to endeavor to obtain a loan of the bank for which transferable stock is to be delivered? Can any objection in relation to the charter of the bank be made to the last expedient?

7th—The 11th section of the act directs the commissioners of the sinking fund to pay the instalments of the loan of two millions to the bank. What is the fund out of which the payments are to be made? and is a farther appropriation necessary?

For reasons which are sufficient, I have but little knowledge of what is going forward in the Senate; but I understand, generally, that the prospects are good. The Senate is more firm and able than at any former period. A certain number will, however, oppose the ratification, but except on a point of which you are informed, I believe there is no difficulty; even that will be so managed as to avoid danger. I think I can assure you that the result will be satisfactory.

P. S. We have as yet no comptroller appointed, and I do not see a prospect of obtaining an efficient character.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, June 22d, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 18th instant. I will reply to one or two points now, and to the rest hereafter.

With regard to the measure of receiving Dutch bonds here to be exchanged, as is usual, it has different sides. To do it may

be, in some measure, necessary to effectuate the main object, as there may be many individuals who, from circumstances, might not think themselves safe in employing the mode which has been adopted, and which is no doubt proper. Yet it is easy to see it might be attended with hazard of imposition. But something may depend on the nature of the checks which the course of the business originally gives to our agents at Amsterdam. If similitude of handwriting is the only internal check, perhaps it may be possible to manage the matter here. A conversation with Cazenove may furnish you with the requisite data. Yet I feel great doubts of the safety of the operation, and, if adopted at all, it ought to be upon condition that no definitive or *alienable* evidences are to be given in exchange for the original bonds till after a period (to be named) long enough to receive at the Treasury the result of the operation in Holland, and a particular and detailed statement of it; and that no interest be payable (in the mean time) without a guarantee for repayment; with these checks none but respectable men will come forward; and there may be little or no risk. Yet, as I intimated, even the expediency of this may depend on the nature of the original checks; and it ought to be announced that the Treasury reserves to itself entire discretion as to the admission or non-admission of the bonds presented here.

With regard to the contract proposed by Mr. Swan, I answer, that I doubt much the advisability of concluding any thing with him here, for being concluded, it must be relied upon as a *primary* resource with the auxiliary and *contingent* expedient of drawing in case of failure; and Mr. Swan is not of standing, or character, to justify the leaving the public credit to depend primarily upon his punctuality. If Mr. Swan is able to do what he offers, it must be on the basis of French government funds, or that of a powerful moneyed combination in Europe. If either, why cannot he be referred to our commissioners and *minister*, under letters from the Treasury stating the offer; the desirableness that such a contract could be formed under adequate guards for its performance; and leaving it to them to judge of the adequateness of the guards which shall be proposed? It appears

to me very material that they should be satisfied with the arrangement, and essential that there should be good security and known resources for the execution of it.

Else no loss on shipping commodities, or otherwise, for the short time it can last, will counterpoise the risk of disappointment, and censure of reliance on an incompetent character.

I will barely observe on one point of the latter part of your letter, namely, the payment of interest under the direction of the commissioners of the sinking fund. I have not the act by me, and can only speak from memory; but I am persuaded it does not require it. I am sure it will be highly inexpedient to place any *extra clogs* on that operation, and I do not perceive why the manner of keeping the accounts may not obviate any embarrassment from a separate management of the two things. I will write again more particularly, on this as well as on other points. I am glad to know that there is a probability of a proper issue to the affair of the treaty.

Yours truly.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, June 26th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have direct information, in confidence, that the minister of France, by a letter received yesterday, has ordered a *fast-sailing vessel* for France to be prepared at this port. No doubt this has connection with the Treaty with England. I presume, with the reserves that decorum requires, he is apprised of the contents of that Treaty. This ought, at least, to go so far as to satisfy him, that there is nothing in it inimical to his country, especially as I suppose it to have been adopted. It is well to guard our peace on all sides, as far as shall consist with dignity.

Indeed, I am of opinion, on the whole, that all further mystery, at present, is unnecessary, and ought to be waived, for the

satisfaction of the public mind. I do not think any scruples of diplomatic decorum of weight enough to stand in the way.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE AND PERFECTLY CONFIDENTIAL.)

PHILADELPHIA, 8d July, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

The treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, which has lately been before the Senate, has, as you will perceive, made its public entry into the gazettes of this city. Of course, the merits and demerits of it will (especially in its unfinished state) be freely discussed.

It is not the opinions of *those* who were determined (before it was promulgated) to *support* or *oppose* it, that I am solicitous to obtain; for *these*, I well know, rarely do more than examine the side to which they lean, without giving the reverse the consideration it deserves; possibly without a wish to be apprised of the reasons on which the objections are founded. My desire is to learn from dispassionate men, who have knowledge of the subject, and abilities to judge of it, the genuine opinion they entertain of *each* article of the instrument, and the result of it in the aggregate. In a word, placed on the footing the matter now stands, it is more than ever an incumbent duty on me to do what propriety and the true interest of this country shall appear to require at my hands on so important a subject, under such delicate circumstances.

You will be at no loss to perceive, from what I have already said, that my wishes are to have the favorable and unfavorable side of *each* article stated and compared together, that I may see the bearing and tendency of them; and ultimately, on which side the balance is to be found. This treaty has, I am sensible, many relations, which, in deciding thereon, ought to be attended to; some of them too are of an important nature.

I know, also, that to judge with precision of its commercial arrangements, there ought likewise to be an intimate acquaintance with the various branches of commerce between this country and Great Britain as it *now* stands; as it will be placed by the treaty; and as it may affect our present, or restrain our future treaties with other nations. All these things, I am persuaded, you have given as much attention to as most men; and I believe that your late employment under the General Government afforded you more opportunities of deriving knowledge therein, than most of them who had not studied and practiced it scientifically, upon a large and comprehensive scale. I do not know how you may be occupied at present, or how incompatible this request of mine may be to the business you have in hand. All I can say is, that however desirous I may be of availing myself of your sentiments on the points I have enumerated, and such others as are involved in the treaty, and the resolution of the Senate, (both of which I send you, lest they should not be at hand,) it is not my intention to interrupt you in that business; or if you are disinclined to go into the investigation I have requested, to press the matter upon you: for of this you may be assured, that, with the most unfeigned regard, and with every good wish for your health and prosperity,

I am your affectionate friend and obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. Admitting that his Britannic Majesty will consent to the suspension of the 12th article of the treaty, is it necessary that the treaty should again go to the Senate? or is the President authorized by the resolution of that body to ratify it without?

G. W.

WADSWORTH TO HAMILTON.

1795.

DEAR SIR:

A week since Franklin Bache passed through this town to the eastward, distributing the treaty. It appears there is a settled plan to disturb the public tranquillity, and the greatest industry and pains are operating for that purpose. Men are in every part of this State misrepresenting the treaty, and have already succeeded to alarm many people. I do not yet find they have yet written any thing but private letters. I yesterday saw Mr. Ellsworth, who says it is best to let them alone until they begin to publish, and then answer them. I believe otherwise. I doubt their publishing any thing in this State, but by their emissaries, who are scattered in all directions, and are busy in slandering the treaty verbally. The Connecticut Courant, published in this town, circulates to the extremity of Vermont, far into the State of New-York, and all through Massachusetts. They publish once a week, and more than five thousand papers. It has a good character from the former publications, but those who formerly furnished this paper with the best political pieces are either grown idle, changed in their politics or stations, so that nothing can be expected. If you will furnish me with any thing on the subject, I will cause it to be published.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 7th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of yesterday is this moment received. Not a line from Mr. Pinckney. I fancy he left London for Madrid about the 8th or 10th of May. Nor has the government any thing but the newspaper accounts of the order you allude to.

Yours ever and affectionately,

G. WASHINGTON.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 10th, 1795.

I have received your several letters dated June 22d, 26th, 30th, and the 2d current.

The new publication of the treaties was a measure not consistent with my first impressions and expectations. It was not, however, left by the Senate in the manner you suppose; this resolution indeed evinces the contrary, and the executive must, in addition to whatever difficulties would have attended a publication if the Senate had been silent respecting the publication, have appeared to oppose their sense by an official disclosure. The French minister has been informed of the contents seasonably. No extraordinary sensibility has been discovered by him respecting the treaty. The Spaniards are, however, feverish with respect to the Mississippi article. Between ourselves, I have reason to believe that a cession of Louisiana and the Floridas will be required by France, as the price of peace, and I believe they will obtain them. The Spaniards must comply, and the French will offer a guaranty of the remaining Spanish American dominions. The effect of this measure on our affairs it is easy to foresee.

By late letters from France there is reason to fear that the most destructive commotions will be produced by the scarcity or rather famine in that country. Mr. M.'s family, of fourteen persons, were allowed two pounds of bread per diem. Flour costs forty dollars per barrel in specie. The finances were in a state of ruin, as appears from facts, though the conclusion is not admitted. The canton of Berne has prohibited the exportation of provisions, from a fear of famine among themselves. I am inclined to believe that our friends, the Dutch, are irretrievably ruined. A commissioner is known to have gone from Paris to Amsterdam for money, &c., &c.

I have every reason, short of official information, to believe that the stock purchased has arrived. This resource, with the liberty of postponing the instalment, the chance of negotiating bills on this country, and an arrangement which I have made

by bills on Hamburg and Paris, in the alternative of a failure at either place, gives every chance for supporting our credit at this crisis, which the nature of things will admit. All money negotiations, except with England, are and must be hazardous to a certain degree. There is, indeed, a French link in the chain upon which reliance must be had.

The anticipations which you intimate in the case of Mr. F—— I have felt with much anxiety. It would astonish you to know how far the capital of this country has been placed in the power of France by speculations to that country and the excessive use of credit during the last season. If we have a good crop, and the ardor of speculation can be checked, so as to allow a loss which I know to be inevitable to fall gradually upon us, the merchants will struggle through; but if we proceed in our present course until a sudden revulsion takes place, the consequences may be serious. As yet the revenue comes in as usual, but further anticipations will, in the present state of things, be attended with difficulty.

Various opinions obtain respecting the treaty, but I think people here are more temperate than in some other places, especially at Baltimore and at the southward. There is much prejudice which will be dispelled, and I think that the country cannot be much excited.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, 18th July, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have in the regular course of the posts been duly favored with your letters of the 9th, accompanying your observations on the several articles of the treaty with Great Britain, and of the 10th, supplementary thereto.

For both, I offer you my sincere thanks, as they have

afforded me great satisfaction. Although it was my wish that your observations on each article should be diffusive, yet I am really ashamed when I behold the trouble it has given you to expose, and to explain so fully as you have, the whole of them.

The most obnoxious article (the 12th) being suspended by the Senate, there is no occasion to express any sentiment thereon. I wish, however, it had appeared in a different form. And although it is but fair to presume that no further advantage could have been obtained in the 3d article, yet the exclusion of the vessels belonging to the United States, from all the "sea-ports, harbors, bays, or creeks of his Majesty," when theirs are admitted into all ours, to the highest ports of entry, is not marked with reciprocity. It may be urged, and truly, that under the existing regulations of the British government, we are not at this time allowed those privileges, except when they are made to subserve their own purposes; whilst from Quebec (but how we are to get there I know not), and upwards, the lakes and the waters on their side of the line are open to our commerce, and that we have equal advantages in the Indian trade on both sides, except within the limits of the Hudson's Bay Company.

All this looks very well on paper, but I much question whether in its operation it will not be found to work very much against us. 1st. What are the limits of that company? Are they so defined, and so clearly understood, as that *our* traders, when they are in *the wilderness*, can with precision say, thus far I may of *right* go without let or hindrance? 2d. Admitting the fact, will they not, having possession of the trade, and the Indians being in their interest, by every artifice of *their* traders, prevent *ours* from extending themselves into the country, sharing in the profits, and thereby bringing on disputes which may terminate seriously? 3d. Does not the hitherto (I might add present) improper interference of the British within our territory, and the solicitude that government has manifested on all occasions to get a footing on the Mississippi, and on the waters and carrying places leading thereto, evince, in a most unequivocal manner, that disputes may be expected to arise within *our* territory as well as *their own*, from the attempts of their traders to

monopolize the trade, and from the overbearing support or underhand countenance they will give, not only in what is *right*, but in what is convenient to its views also?

My opinion of this article, therefore, is, that it would have been more for our peace, if not for our interest, to have restrained the traders of both nations to their own side of the line, leaving the Indians on each to go to whichsoever their interest, convevience, or inclination might prompt them. This would have thwarted the views of the British on the Mississippi, whilst all the doors into Upper Canada, and the western country, would have been as wide open *then* as they are now made by this treaty; and no difficulty, I am persuaded, would have been found by our people of introducing goods across the line after they had got them to it, and the posts possessed by us, if this avenue should be found the most convenient and cheapest.

I wish, too, the 2d article had been more definite with respect to the terms "precincts or jurisdiction;" except that the shortness of its duration for operation may afford a remedy, I should expect many disputes to arise therefrom.

I asked, or intended to ask, in my letter of the 3d, whether you conceived (admitting the suspension of the 12th article should be agreed to by the British government) there would be a necessity for the treaty going before the Senate again for their advice and consent? This question takes its birth from a declaration of a minority of that body to that effect.

With much truth and sincerity,

I am always your affectionate,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

COLONEL ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

P. S. I was almost in the act of sending the inclosed letter to the post-office, when your favor of the 11th was put into my hands.

Query. Whether the passage which you have quoted from the 15th article, in your letter of the above date, does not mean that no prohibition shall be imposed on the exportation or importation of any articles to and from the United States, which shall not also be imposed on the like exportation or importation to or

from other foreign nations? That is, that the United States shall be under no other disability than any other foreign nations. If so, there would seem to be no privilege granted, but only an engagement, that other nations shall not be rivals to the United States, by being freed from the prohibition. For example. Your idea is, that whatever of its own produce Spain may carry from their territory; that is they may re-export to England Spanish produce. I wish this could be made clear; for I readily see the advantage of it in one sense; though I am not sure that we can bring any country, except the East Indies, into our own, the produce of it, and re-export it to England, so as to make a profit from this circuitous voyage. G. W.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 14th July, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your favor of yesterday this moment, when I am on the eve of a journey to Virginia.

The opinion which you have given as to its being necessary to submit the *new* article to the Senate, being in direct opposition to that of the Secretaries and of the Attorney-General, has occasioned some embarrassment with me. For I always understood it to be the sense of a majority of the Senate, that they were not to pass their judgment upon the new article further than they have done. But as I shall be absent, and Mr. Randolph has before him the bringing up of this business to a close, I wish you to write to him your ideas, if upon mature reflection you shall think differently from the gentlemen around me, or you find the sense of the Senate to be different from what I have been led to expect. I have told Mr. Randolph that your sentiments do not agree with those which I received from the officers of government, and have desired him to revise them. I have

also told him that I have requested the favor of you to write to him on this subject.

Very affectionately,
And always am, yours,
GEO. WASHINGTON.

P. S. Notwithstanding one great object of my visit to Mount Vernon is relaxation, yet to hear from you the sentiments entertained of the treaty, and in short, on any other interesting subject with which the public mind is occupied, would be a considerable gratification. The state of our pecuniary matters in Holland, at this time, is a bar to Mr. Adams's leaving that country; but the next best step will be adopted.

Yours, as before, G. W.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 20, 1795.

I have received your several letters, dated June 22d, 26th, 30th, and the 2d current.

The new publication of the treaty was a measure not consistent with my first impressions and expectations. It was not, however, left by the Senate in the manner you suppose. Their resolution, indeed, evinces the contrary; and the Executive must, in addition to whatever difficulties would have attended a publication, if the Senate had been silent respecting the publication, have appeared to oppose their anger by an official disclosure.

The French minister has been informed of the contents seasonably. No extraordinary sensibility has been discovered by him respecting the treaty. The Spaniards are, however, feverish with respect to the Mississippi article.

Between ourselves, I have reason to believe that a cession of Louisiana and the Floridas will be required by *France* as the price of peace, and I believe they will obtain them.

The Spaniards must comply, and the French will offer a guarantee of the remaining Spanish American dominions. The effects of this measure on our affairs it is easy to foresee.

By late letters from France, there is reason to fear that the most destructive commotions will be produced by the scarcity or rather famine in that country. Mr. Monroe's family, of fourteen persons, were allowed two pounds of bread per diem. Flour cost forty dollars per barrel in Spain. The finances were in a state of ruin, as appears from facts, though the conclusion is not admitted. The canton of Berne have prohibited the exportation of provisions from a fear of famine among themselves.

I am inclined to believe that our friends the Dutch are irretrievably ruined—a commission is known to have gone from Paris to Amsterdam for money, &c., &c.

I have every reason, short of official information, to believe that the stock purchased has arrived. This resource, with the liberty of postponing the instalment, the chance of negotiating bills on this country, and an arrangement which I have made by bills on Hamburgh and Paris in the alternative of a failure at either place, gives every chance for supporting our credit at this crisis, which the nature of things will admit. All money negotiations, except with England, are and must be hazardous to a certain degree. There is indeed a French link in the chain upon which reliance must be had.

The anticipations which you intimate in the case of Mr. Franklin, I have felt with much anxiety. It would astonish you to know how far the capital of this country has been placed in the power of France by speculations to that country, and the excessive use of credit during the last season. If we have a good crop, and the ardor of speculation can be checked, so as to allow a loss, which I know to be inevitable, to fall gradually upon us, the merchants will struggle through, but if we proceed in our present course, until a sudden revulsion takes place, the consequences may be serious. As yet the revenue comes in as usual, but further anticipations will, in the present state of things, be attended with difficulty.

I shall do every thing practicable for Mr. Franklin, but I do

not see how the measure he has resorted to, of entering a caveat against the transfer of the new stock, can be of any service. This government certainly cannot compel the execution of a contract by the French government by any process in this country.

I have looked at my house and in the office, and sent to the Secretary of the Senate respecting your French book, and have caused a general search for Mr. Livingston's book and papers, but as yet without success: the letters ought to have been with Mr. Cox and Mr. Harrison, who say they have not had them. I shall pursue the matter further. Your opinion on some of the points mentioned in my letter will be acceptable, when you have leisure.

Various opinions obtain respecting the treaty, but I think people here are more temperate than in some other places, especially at Baltimore, and at the southward. There is much prejudice which will be dispelled, and I think that the country cannot be much excited.

RANDOLPH TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 21st, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I am much obliged to you for your *explanatory* letter to myself, and your permission for my inspection of the two addressed to your *southern correspondent;* I had intended to drop you a few lines upon the depending subject. But hearing that you are to be at the Supreme Court of the United States, and not being able to say to you much sooner than the first day of their session what I wish, it will be deferred to a personal interview.

I am, dear Sir,

With great esteem and regard, &c.

LINCOLN TO HAMILTON.

BOSTON, July 24th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have the pleasure to forward the inclosed letter from our treasurer, which will give the best light I can obtain on the question you submitted to me.

Are the people mad!

With the highest esteem, and the warmest affection,

I am your friend and obedient servant,

B. LINCOLN.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, July 28th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

We have some cause to suspect, though not enough to believe, that our Jacobins meditate serious mischief to certain individuals. It happens that the militia of this city, from the complexion of its officers in general, cannot be depended on, and it will be difficult for some time to organize a competent armed substitute. In this situation our eyes turn as a resource in a sudden emergency, upon the military now in the forts, but these, we are told, are under marching orders. Pray converse confidentially with the Secretary at War, and engage him to suspend the march. Matters in eight or ten days will explain themselves.

How are things truly in Philadelphia? I have good reason to believe that the President, before he left Philadelphia, had concluded to ratify the treaty according to the advice of the

Senate. Has any thing finally been done, or are we where we were?

Yours, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 28th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

You see that attempts are made to stir up a flame, and convulse the country respecting the treaty. Though the actors hitherto are known to be a factious set of men, and their followers generally a contemptible mob, yet from the systematical manner in which they have proceeded, and some curious facts which have recently come to my knowledge, I cannot but suspect *foul play* by persons not generally suspected. Every thing is conducted in a mysterious and strange manner by a certain character here, and, to my astonishment, I am recently informed that Mr. Rutledge has had a tender of the office of Chief Justice.

By the favor of Heaven, the commission is not opened, and now I presume it will not be; but how much ruin and disgrace has the country seen?

Cannot you come and attend the Supreme Court for a few days the next week? A bed at my house is at your command. If you cannot, pray drop me a line.

Will you reply briefly to a few questions I lately stated? I care not how briefly. Your ideas upon a system projected essentially by you, will enable me to proceed with less hesitation. Indeed I need some help. There is no comptroller here as yet, and now I have suffered an irreparable loss by the appointment of Mr. Kane to be assistant cashier of the bank.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

MOUNT VERNON, July 29th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letters of the 20th and 21st inst. found me at this place, after a hot and disagreeable ride.

As the measures of the government respecting the treaty were taken before I left Philadelphia, something more imperious than has yet happened must turn up to occasion a change. Still, it is very desirable to ascertain, if possible, after the paroxysm of the fever is a little abated, what the real temper of the people is concerning it; for at present the cry against the treaty is like that against a mad dog; and every one, in a manner, seems engaged in running it down.

That it has received the most tortured interpretation, and that the writings against it (which are very industriously circulated) are pregnant of the most abominable misrepresentations, admits of no doubt; yet there are to be found, so far as my information extends, many well-disposed men who conceive that in the settlement of *old* disputes a proper regard to reciprocal justice does not appear in the treaty; whilst others also well enough affected to the government, are of opinion, that to have had no commercial treaty, would have been better for this country than the restricted one agreed to; inasmuch, say they, the nature of our exports and imports (without any extra or violent measures) would have forced or led to a more adequate intercourse between the two nations without any of those shackles which the treaty has imposed. In a word, that as our exports consist chiefly of *provisions* and *raw materials*, which to the manufacturers of Great Britain and their islands in the West Indies, affords employment and food, they must have had them on our own terms, if they were not to be obtained on their *own;* whilst the *imports* of this country offers the best mart for their fabrics; and of course is the principal support of their manufacturers. But the string which is most played on, because it strikes with most force the

popular ear, is the violation, as they term it, of our engagements with France; or, in other words, the predilection shown by that instrument to Great Britain at the expense of the French nation. The consequences of which are more to be apprehended than any which are likely to flow from other causes, as grounds of opposition, because, whether the fact is in any degree true or not, it is the interest of the French, whilst the animosity or jealousies between the two nations exist, to avail themselves of such spirit to keep us and Great Britain at variance; and they will, in my opinion, accordingly do it. To what length their policy will induce them to carry matters is too much in embryo at this moment to decide; but I predict much embarrassment to the government therefrom—and, in my opinion, too much pains cannot be taken by those who speak or write in favor of the treaty, to place this matter in its true light.

I have seen with pleasure that a writer in one of the New-York papers, under the signature of Camillus, has promised to answer—or rather to defend the treaty which has been made with Great Britain. To judge of this work from the first number, which I have seen, I augur well of the performance; and shall expect to see the subject handled in a clear, distinct and satisfactory manner;—but if measures are not adopted for its dissemination, a few only will derive lights from the knowledge or labor of the author, whilst the opposition pieces will spread their poison in all directions; and Congress, more than probable, will assemble with the unfavorable impressions of their constituents. The difference of conduct between the friends and foes of order and good government, is in nothing more striking than that the latter are always working like bees; whilst the former, depending oftentimes *too much* and *too long* upon the sense and good disposition of the people to work conviction, neglect the means of effecting it.

With sincere esteem and regard,

I am your affectionate

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 30th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have your letter of the 28th. I will see the Secretary at War this morning, and you may rely upon it the movement will be suspended.

The *true state* of things in this city is, that the treaty was at first unpopular. The expectations of vain, sanguine men, who considered this country as all-powerful, and entitled to dictate, were not satisfied. Every engine of faction was successfully set at work. At present there is more temper and moderation; the truth begins to prevail. I think we shall have no dangerous riots; but one month will determine the fate of our country, so far as depends on ourselves. The extreme hazards of foreign war I do not take into account.

I dare not *write*, and hardly dare *think* of, what I *know* and *believe* respecting a certain character, whose situation gives him a decided influence. There has as yet nothing more passed between the government and Mr. Hammond than a verbal conference, in which the President's opinion respecting the *merits* of the treaty has been declared to be like that of the Senate. No written memorial has passed, nor have any *measures* as relative to the ratifications been *adopted*.

The ratification of the President has, moreover, been connected with the repeal of some unknown order, respecting vessels bound with provisions to France. Though this was a condition improperly prescribed, in my opinion, yet the circumstance might have been mentioned in a manner which would not be offensive, and have assumed the form of a prudent precaution on the part of the President.

But what must the British government think of the United States when they find the treaty clogged with one condition by the Senate, with another by the President; no answer given, in a precise form, after forty days; no minister in that country to take up negotiations proposed by ourselves; the country rising

into a flame; their minister's house insulted by a mob; their flag dragged through the streets, as in Charlestown, and burnt before the doors of their consul; a driveller and fool appointed Chief Justice, &c., &c.; can they believe we desire peace?

I shall take immediate measures with two of my colleagues this very day. They are firm and honest men. We will, if possible, to use a French phrase, *save our country.* You must not think we have been to blame for the delay. We have been constantly amused by Randolph, who has said that the President was determined to ratify. The precise state of the business has never been communicated till within a few days. The affairs of his department are solely conducted by himself. Feel no concern, however, for I see a *clue* which I know will conduct us through every labyrinth except that of war. On that point we must take our chance. It would be well if you, or Mr. King, or Governor Jay, could be here some time next week, provided too much speculation would not be excited.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, August 3d, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The inclosed was written, as you will perceive, on the 29th ultimo, and, with many other letters, was sent to the post-office in Alexandria, to proceed with the northern mail next morning. But the blundering postmaster of that place, in putting the letters addressed *to*, put all the letters *from me* into my own bag; of course they were returned to me. Since which the unusual (at almost any season of the year) and violent rains which have fallen, have given such interruption to the post as to detain my letters to this time; and although I am now sending them to the post-office, I have little expectation of their proceeding to-morrow—the waters being yet very high, and the bridges all

gone. In short, the damage of *every* sort is very great in these parts.

Yours, always,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, August 10th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter by Saturday's post. The one you inquire about was received.

I incline very much to the opinion that this will be the proper course of conduct in reference to the order to seize our vessels with provisions, viz.: To send to our agent the treaty ratified as advised by the Senate, with this instruction,—That if the order for seizing provisions is in force when he receives it, he is to inform the British ministry that he has the treaty ratified, but that he is instructed not to exchange the ratification till that order is rescinded, since the United States cannot ever give an implied sanction to the principle. At the same time, a remonstrance ought to go from this country, well considered, and well digested, *even to a word,* to be delivered against the principle of the order.

My reasons for this opinion are summarily these:—

Firstly—That in fact we are too much interested in the exemption of provisions from seizure, to give even an implied sanction to the contrary pretensions.

Secondly—That the exchange of ratifications pending such an order, would give color to an abusive construction of the eighteenth article of the treaty, as though it admitted of the seizure of provisions.

Thirdly—That this would give *cause* of umbrage to France, because it would be more than merely to refrain from resisting by force, an innovation injurious to her; but it would be to give a sanction to it in the midst of a war.

Fourthly—It would be thus construed in our country, and would destroy confidence in the government.

Fifthly—It would scarcely be reputable to a nation to conduct a treaty with a power to heal past controversies, at the very moment of a new and existing violation of its rights.

P. S. If an order has existed, and has been rescinded, the remonstrance ought still to be presented, after the exchange of ratifications, as a protest against the principle, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, August 15, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The President has decided that the treaty shall be ratified, and transmitted for exchange immediately; and in my opinion he has decided right. I regret that this was not done long since, as I presume much of the party spirit which has been invited would have been prevented.

A government like ours can rarely take a middle course on any point which interests the public feelings. Delay, for whatever reason, would be construed into a dislike of the treaty itself; and this opinion diffusing among the people, would generate the most inveterate factions. Circumstances have happened tending to incite a distrust of the sincerity of this government in the British cabinet, which can be no otherwise explained than by a ratification.

RANDOLPH TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, August 16, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I expected to have the pleasure of seeing you here at the Supreme Court, when I meant to enter into a full conversation with you. But being disappointed, I shall only beg you to read a letter, which I have this day written to Mr. Jay, and requested him to show to you. If I do not mistake, your ideas and mine were not very different as to the *provision order*.

I am, dear Sir,

With real esteem and regard, &c.

PHILADELPHIA, August 16th, 1795.

SIR:

I have forwarded, agreeably to your Excellency's request, the letter which you inclosed to me for General Lee.

It was always my intention to inform you of the President's final act on the treaty. This being now taken by an assurance in writing to Mr. Hamilton that it would be immediately ratified; and the necessary forms being on the point of completion, little need be added on that head. But candor induces me to explain to you some opinions, produced by a recent occurrence, relative to an immediate exchange of ratifications.

You know, sir, the sentiments which I have always entertained, and still entertain upon the treaty. To dictate the terms we could not expect; and therefore the single question with me was, whether, *under all circumstances*, the pleasant things did not outweigh the unpleasant. My mind told me that in this view we ought to ratify. So that *upon the treaty itself*, I have been constantly prepared to give my affirmation. But the late order for seizing our provision vessels goes beyond the treaty; and required, that for the sake of national dignity, and of silencing the complaints of the French, one effort ought to be made for removing that order out of the way. To exchange ratifications and afterwards object, was a feeble and unavailing expedient. The means of rendering the effort effectual, seemed to consist in not consummating the treaty, until the minister who was to exchange should urge the rescinding of the order, and, upon being refused, should receive further instructions. I saw no danger of losing the treaty by this measure; because the President might as well have the ratification exchanged a few months hence, as now; and the difference of time between an immediate exchange and a future one would have been but a few weeks; the space sufficient for the passage of the papers from London, if the British king

should assent to the exchange being made in the United States. I had a hope, too, that even if the order was not withdrawn by that time, that the present campaign, which is probably the last, would be so far advanced, and the French harvest would have banished famine to such a degree, that we should have avoided the suspicion of a desire to co-operate in the attempt to starve France. I was persuaded also that the treaty will, for the most part, be postponed for its effect, until Congress shall pass auxiliary laws. I doubted, too, whether the surrender of the posts would be much quickened by concluding the treaty immediately; since I feared that the unexpected waste of this summer, without its completion, might prompt the British government to take a further time.

The President was occupied until the 13th of July in considering what was to be done; and then decided on a course somewhat analogous to these ideas. He left Philadelphia on the 15th; and about a week afterwards I sent down to him at Mount Vernon the draft of a memorial to Mr. Hammond, upon the subject of the treaty. From the blunder of the postmaster at Alexandria, and the great floods of rain, his instructions and the memorial were not returned to me until the 5th of August. Although I was at perfect liberty to announce publicly the President's decision, and was rather urged to do so, yet I held it best to keep him at liberty to mature the business farther; and accordingly he, on Thursday last, thought proper to take a course very different from that which he first projected. In that course I acquiesce, and shall certainly support it to the best of my faculties.

I make these last observations, because from something which I have seen, I am confident, that it has been supposed, that unnecessary delay has occurred, and for a purpose, not reconcilable with a friendship to the treaty. In this view I will go into the following statement of the papers, which I had drawn, upon the plan which the President at first preferred.

These were a memorial and instructions.

The memorial declared, that the President would ratify, upon the provision order being laid aside: that if this was not done, the President would take the subject into farther consideration; that the doing of this should be the only obstacle to the pursuing of the advice of the Senate; that in order however to produce perfect cordiality the King was *invited*—1st. To provide by some clear distinction against the impressment of our citizens. 2d. To reconsider the compensation of the negroes. 3d. To cause the execution of the 7th article to be expedited, and the expense thereof lessened. 4th. To give instructions against the vexations of privateers and the rigors of some of the American admiralties. The reason why I again brought up the negroes was, that, as the amount would to the British nation be small, so the King might, upon reconsideration, be desirous of giving the best chance for conciliation, by removing one of the chief irritations.

You perceive, sir, that there was no ultimatum in all this; nor yet the semblance of one, except as to the provision order, which could be an obstruction for only a few months more.

The instructions went upon a broader scale; but as the negotiation under them was *subsequent* to the ratification, it was referred to the discretion of the minister to endeavor to procure a greater latitude of advantages, than we enjoy. This being so familiar a practice, I need not detail the particulars of that instrument.

I ought to add, that the reason why a memorial was at all thought of, was, that the President at first believed (as I confess I did), that he could not ratify until the new suspending article was agreed to by the British King. It thereby became necessary to assure him in writing, that he affected no delays, and meant to ratify if the provision order was abolished.

I will thank you to permit Mr. King and Col. Hamilton to see this letter; and I beg you to receive the tender of that respect and esteem, with which I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

EDMUND RANDOLPH.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, August 31st, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Since my return to this city I have received a letter from you dated August.

We know officially, as well as from the effects, that an order for seizing all provision vessels going to France has been issued by the British Government; but so secretly, that as late as the 27th of June it had not been published in London; it was communicated to the cruisers only, and not known until the captures brought it to light. By these high-handed measures of that government, and the outrageous and insulting conduct of its officers, it would seem next to impossible to keep peace between the United States and Great Britain.

To this moment we have received no explanation of Holmes' conduct from their *chargé des affaires* here; although application was made for it before the departure of Mr. Hammond on the statement of Governor Fenner, and complaint of the French min-

ister. Conduct like this disarms the friends of peace and order, while they are the very things which those of a contrary description wish to see practised.

I meant no more than barely to touch upon the subject of this letter, the object of it being, to request the favor of you to give me the points on which, in your opinion, our *new* negotiator is to dwell when we come into the field of negotiation again; agreeably to the recommendation of the Senate; agreeably to what appears to have been contemplated by Mr. Jay and Lord Grenville, at the close of the treaty subscribed by them; and agreeably, also, to what you conceive *ought* to be brought forward and *insisted* upon on this occasion.

I am sorry that I have been so late in applying for this opinion, but a coincidence of unexpected events have involved me in more than usual business, and some of it not of a very pleasant nature. This has occasioned the delay; but the *pros* and *cons* relative to the treaty that *is*, and the treaty that *ought* to be, in the judgment of the opponents, are so much in your view, that if you wanted a remembrancer, you would be at no loss from these discussions to advert to them; and you will require but little time to furnish me with what I have here asked. This I press with more earnestness, inasmuch as circumstances will render it very inconvenient for me to remain here longer than the present week (before I return to Mount Vernon for my family), but which I must do until the instructions for the new negotiator are completed.

Although you are not in the administration—a thing I sincerely regret—I must, nevertheless, (knowing how intimately acquainted you are with all the concerns of this country,) request the favor of you to note down such occurrences as, in your opinion, are proper subjects for communication to Congress at their next session—and particularly as to the manner in which this treaty should be brought forward to that body; as it will, in any aspect it is susceptible of receiving, be the source of much declamation, and will, I have no doubt, produce a hot session.

With sincere regard, I am, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obedient

GEO. WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

Monday Morning, 2d September, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Interwoven in the inclosed address are sentiments as difficult to answer, as it would seem hard to pass by unnoticed, believing, as I do, that they are the sentiments of a large part of the people of this country.

I would thank you for making such alterations in the expression of the draft of an answer (inclosed), as in your judgment will make it palatable on all sides, or unexceptionable. The bearer will wait, as I wish to return the answer by the mail of to-day.

Yours always,

G. WASHINGTON.

No matter how rough the answer comes to me, so that it can be read.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, Sept. 4, 1795.

SIR:

I had the pleasure of receiving, two days since, your letter of the 31st ultimo. A great press of business, and an indifferent state of health, have put it out of my power sooner to attend to it.

The incidents which have lately occurred have been in every way vexatious and untoward. They render indispensable a very serious, though calm and measured, remonstrance from this government, carrying among others this idea, that it is not sufficient that the British government entertain towards our nation no hostile dispositions; 'tis essential that they take adequate measures to prevent those oppressions of our citizens, and of our commerce, by their officers and courts, of which there are

too frequent examples, and by which we are exposed to suffer inconveniences too nearly approaching to those of a state of war. A strong expectation should be signified of the punishment of Capt. Holmes, for the attempt to violate an ambassador passing through our territory, and for the hostile and offensive menaces which he has thrown out. The dignity of our country, and the preservation of the confidence of the people in the government, require both solemnity and seriousness in these representations.

As to the negotiation for alteration in, and additions to, the treaty, I think it ought to embrace the following objects:—

A new modification of the 12th article, so as to extend the tonnage, and restrain the prohibition to export from this country to articles of the growth or production of the British islands. The more the tonnage is extended the better; but I think ninety tons would work advantageously if nothing better could be done. I had even rather have the article with seventy, as it stood, than not at all, if the restriction on exportation is placed on the proper footing. Some of our merchants, however, think its value would be questionable at so low a tonnage as seventy. It would be also desirable that the article should enumerate the commodities which may be carried to, and brought from the British islands. This would render it more precise and more intelligible to all.

Great Britain may have substantial security for the execution of the restriction, if it be stipulated on our side,—"That a law shall be passed and continued in force during the continuance of the article, prohibiting the exportation in vessels of the United States, of any of the articles in question, if brought from British islands, on pain of forfeiture of the vessel, for wilful breach of the law; and that the same law shall provide that the regulations contained in our laws respecting drawbacks, shall be applied to all exportations in our vessels of the articles in question, to ascertain that they were imported into the United States from other than British islands, and this whether a drawback of duty is required or not by the exporter; and shall also provide that all such articles exported in our vessels from the United States, shall be expressed in the clearance, with a certificate of the collector endorsed, specifying that he has carefully examined,

according to the treaty and to the law, the identity of the articles exported, and that it did *bona fide* appear to him that they had not been imported from any British island or islands." This security is the greatest difficulty in the case, and would, in my opinion, be given by a provision similar to the foregoing.

It would be a very valuable alteration in the 13th article, if a *right could be stipulated* for the United States to go with articles taken in the British territories in India, to other parts of Asia. The object of the present restriction upon us to bring them to America, was, I believe, to prevent our interference with the British East India Company in the European trade in India goods. If so, there could be no objection to our having a right to carry commodities from the British territories to other parts of Asia. But if all this latitude cannot be obtained, it would be a great point gained to have a right to carry them thence to China. It is a usual and beneficial course of the trade to go from the United States to *Bombay*, and take in there a freight for *Canton*, purchase at the last place a cargo of teas, &c.

It would be well if that part of the 15th article, which speaks of *countervailing* duties, could be so explained as to fix its sense. I am of opinion that its only practicable construction is, and ought to be, that they may lay on the *exportation* from their *European dominions*, in vessels of the United States, the *same additional* duties on articles which we lay on the *importation* of the *same articles* into the United States in *British vessels*. But the terms of the clause are vague and general, and may give occasion to set up constructions injurious and contentious.

As to the more exact equalization of duties, of which this article speaks, it is a ticklish subject, and had better, I think, be left alone.

It would be right that it should be expressly agreed that wherever our vessels pay, in the ports of Great Britain, higher charges than their own vessels, a proportional reduction shall be made out of any duty of tonnage which may be laid on our vessels to counteract the difference of tonnage on theirs in our ports.

The 18th article is really an unpleasant one, and, though there

is, I fear, little chance of altering it for the better, it may be necessary, for the justification of the President, to attempt it. The standard to be approached by us as nearly as possible is that in our treaty with France. As to the point of free ships making free goods, though it be desirable to us to establish it if practicable—and ought to be aimed at—yet I neither expect that it will be done at present, nor that the *great maritime powers* will be disposed to suffer it to become an established rule, and I verily believe that it will be very liable, though stipulated, to be disregarded, as it has been by France through the greater part of the present war. But naval stores and provisions ought, if possible, to be expressly excluded from the list of contraband—except when going to a blockaded or besieged port, town, or fortress, or to a fleet or army engaged in a military operation, for I can imagine no other cases in which there is a just pretence to make *provisions* contraband.

Some provision for the protection of our seamen is infinitely desirable. At least Great Britain ought to agree that no seamen shall be impressed out of any of our vessels at sea, and that none shall be taken out of such vessel in any of her colonies which were in the vessel *at the time of her arrival* at such colony. This provision ought to be pressed with energy as one unexceptionably just, and at the same time safe for Great Britain.

The affair of the negroes, to give satisfaction, may be retouched, but with caution and delicacy. The resolution proposed in the Senate will afford a good standard for this.

As to the crowd of loose suggestions respecting the treaty, which have no reasonable foundation, it would not consist with the reputation of the Government to move concerning them. Only reasonable things merit, or can, with propriety, have attention.

I beg, Sir, that you will at no time have any scruples about commanding me. I shall always with pleasure comply with your commands. I wish my health, or the time for it, would permit me now to be more correct. The other part of your letter shall be carefully attended to in time.

With the truest respect, and the most affectionate attachment, I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient and humble servant,

A. HAMILTON.

The President of the United States.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 26, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 20th, and regret the cause which deprived me of the pleasure of seeing you.

Nothing is known of the authors to which you allude. The "Features of the Treaty," were doubtless painted by Dallas. Doctors Logan and Lieb, Bache, Beckley, T. L. Shippen, are much suspected. I. Sayre, of New Jersey, is, I understand, very violent. Perhaps the avowed intemperance of these men against the government, is the only evidence against them. I can furnish no direct proof.

Mr. Randolph has published a preface, which you have seen. This is the opening up of a new and very extraordinary campaign—perhaps you know something of the cause of his hostility. I consider Mr. Randolph as perfectly desperate and malignant. He will do all the mischief in his power. His long acquaintance with our affairs; the predominating influence which he has possessed in those which concerned his own department, and his skill in misrepresentation, furnish him with important advantages. Dallas is councillor in all his councils, and will, of course, prune away many indiscretions, and render a bad cause as plausible as the nature of it will admit. I rely, however, upon the sense and virtue of the public, and trust that the truth will prevail.

The public affairs are certainly in a critical state. I do not clearly see how those of the treasury are to be managed. Our

foreign resources are dried up; our domestic are deeply anticipated, at least as respects the bank. Banks are multiplying like mushrooms. The prices of all our exports are impaired by paper negotiations and unfounded projects, so that no foreign market will indemnify the shippers. Our commerce is harassed by the war, and our internal revenue unproductive of the expected sums, owing to prejudice, combination, and the want of competent officers. Usury absorbs much of that capital which might be calculated upon as a resource, if visionary speculations could be destroyed.

You know, however, that I shall do the best in my power, and that intimations from you will always be thankfully received.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, October 8d, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the ——— and thank you for the information. As to Randolph, I shall be surprised at nothing, but if the facts come out, his personal influence is at all events damned. No coloring will remove unfavorable impressions. To do mischief, he must work in the dark.

What you say respecting your own department disquiets me, for I think we shall, for the present, weather all storms but those from real deficiencies in our public arrangements. Not knowing details, I can attempt to suggest nothing, except the general observation, that if the means heretofore provided, are seriously likely to prove inadequate, Congress ought to be explicitly told so, in order to a further provision. It was a maxim in my mind, that executive arrangements should not fail for want of full disclosure to the Legislature. Then, if adequate provision be not made, the responsibility is theirs. The worst evil we can struggle with, is inefficiency in the measures of government.

If I remember right, it never appeared that Fauchet had any

power to make a commercial treaty with us, and the late Attorney-General (Bradford) informed me, that *Adet* had power only *to treat*, none *to conclude*. How are these things? I ask for special reasons.*

What is the object of the dispatch boat from France? Nothing menacing, I hope.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 6th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I will in a few days inform you of the facts upon which my former letter was predicated.

The inclosed case of the Betsey, Captain Furlong, creates much alarm here, and I think with reason. The same principles will extirpate nine-tenths of our claims for spoliations, and lead to new assaults upon our commerce.

I wish to know your opinion of the mode of proceedings under the 7th article of our treaty with England. Must *all cases* go through a process of litigation before the English *courts* before they are submitted to Commissioners? If so, for what purpose? Is the *legality* or *illegality*, the *regularity* or *irregularity* of a capture to be determined solely in those courts? Or will the commissioners take up claims *de novo?* This is an interesting question,

* Col. Pickering writes Wolcott in reference to the above:

"October 6th, 1795

"DEAR SIR:—Mr. Taylor informs me that Mr. Fauchet never to his knowledge made even any overtures relative to a treaty of any kind. I have cast my eye over those of Mr. Adet, by which it appears, that he is authorized to digest with the American government a new treaty of commerce and a new consular convention, but not to conclude any thing. Mr. Randolph agreed to meet him on this ground. If the articles digested should meet the approbation of the respective governments, they might give full powers to constitute of these articles the proposed new treaties.

"Sincerely yours,

"T. PICKERING."

for there is now little doubt but that the commissioners of appeals will *affirm* most of the judgments of condemnation.

My doubt on this subject principally arises from finding that the 6th article provides for the British debts in the same manner as the 7th provides for the spoliation cases, and, moreover, defines the cases to be those whose relief cannot be had in the *ordinary course of judicial proceedings.*

Now it appears to me it would be a very dilatory, expensive, and unnecessary process to compel an Englishman to travel through our courts, merely to ascertain that they could not do him justice, and to prepare his case for the commissioners. The same objections exist against a similar operation in the British courts of admiralty. Is it not, therefore, the meaning of the treaty that commissioners shall settle both descriptions of claims, and award compensation according to principles of equity? And if this is the case, why is Mr. Bayard trying questions which are decided against him, at an expense which he estimates may amount to £75,000 sterling.

I must own I do not see through this business, and though you may think it strange, I beg you to remember that I knew nothing concerning the treaty till lately, and cannot devote much time to it, without sacrificing objects more immediately in the line of my duty.

The fact is, that the old doctrines of *inalienable allegiance*, and that neutrals may not, in *time of war*, carry on a commerce *inhibited in time of peace*, are to be advanced against the United States; and from present appearances, they will govern the courts of Admiralty. The effects which these principles will have, I need not state to you; if all this subject cannot be taken up by commissioners and compromised equitably, the discussion of the claims will work infinite mischief. I wish therefore to see some way in which Mr. Bayard's agency at the British courts might be arrested.

Mr. Fauchet made no overtures relating to a treaty of any kind. M. Adet says he is authorized to digest a new treaty of commerce, and a new consular convention, but not to *conclude.* Mr. Randolph agreed to meet him on this ground, but nothing has been done that I know of.

I know nothing of dispatches. The French minister is reserved; he thinks more than he expresses, and his expressions breathe something of dissatisfaction. We are, I think, in no very good way, but must make the best of circumstances. What you say of *efficiency* is true, but there are no *materials* to be efficient with.

Colonel Pickering and myself are perfectly agreed, and he is as firm, industrious, and intelligent, as any body could wish. There is, however, a mass of business, and few of that class of men in the public service, who understand details, and endeavor to keep things in order. Even our able clerks cannot be retained; several have actually gone. Be pleased to present my respects to Mrs. Hamilton, and believe me ever yours.

N. B.—I have found your *ordonnance de la marine*, but have no way to send it.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, October 13th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 6th instant.

I am of opinion, that the commissioners to be appointed under the seventh article, are competent to grant relief, in all cases of captures and condemnations of our property, during the present war, and antecedent to the treaty, which were *contrary to the laws of nations*, and in which there is *adequate evidence*, (of which they are to judge bona fide), that compensation could not, at the time of the treaty, for *whatever reason*, be actually obtained. I think their power competent to relief, *after* a decision, *in the last resort;* that is, by the Lords Commissioners of Appeals, and if the proper steps have been taken to ascertain that justice cannot be had, in the ordinary course of justice, *before* and *without* such decision.

This opinion is founded upon the following reasons.

Firstly. The subject of complaint to be redressed, is *irregular* or *illegal* captures or *condemnations.* The word "condemnations" is general. It is not restricted to condemnations in the inferior courts, or in the final Court of Appeals. It may then apply to either. Condemnation *in the last resort*, may have been had prior to the treaty. There being no restriction, they, like those in inferior tribunals, were equally within the terms of complaint. But could they be *illegal?* Yes, in controversies between nations, respecting the application of the rules of the laws of nations, decisions of the highest court of one of the parties, if contrary to those rules, are illegal. In other words, they are contrary to that law, which is the standard of legality and illegality between nations, and, if manifestly so, are a cause of war. Moreover, this rule of legality or illegality, is recognized by the article itself, in that part which authorizes the commissioners to decide according to the merits of the several cases, to justice, equity, *and the laws of nations.*

Secondly. The article contemplates that "*various circumstances*" may obstruct compensation in the ordinary course of justice. These terms would not be fully satisfied by tying the article down, as has been attempted, to cases of insolvency and absconding.

Thirdly. The article expressly declares, that when compensation cannot, "*for whatever reason,*" be had in the ordinary course of justice, it shall be made by the British government upon the award of the commissioners. It is inadmissible to narrow down these very comprehensive terms to the two cases of *insolvency* or *absconding.* They are commensurate with every cause of irregularity or illegality, pronounced such by the laws of nations. The exceptions of manifest delay, or negligence, or wilful omission, confirm the extensive interpretation.

Fourthly. The commissioners are not restricted in the description of the cases they are to take up; and they are to decide them according to their *merits*, to *justice*, *equity*, and the *laws of nations.* These terms are as latitudinary as they could be made. They seem formed on purpose to overrule any technical difficulties, with regard to local tribunals, or positive rules of decision in those tribunals.

Fifthly. The nature of the circumstances which led to the article, and which involved a controversy between two nations, respecting the rules of the laws of nations, as well as the application of those rules. The natural presumption is, that it was meant to refer this controversy, in all its latitude, to the extraordinary tribunal created; to transfer the right of judgment of each nation, which being exercised differently, might have ended in war, to that tribunal. Any thing less than this would be inadequate to the origin of the business, to the solemnity of the provision, or to the views which, from the facts, must be conceived to have governed the parties.

All this appears so clear to me, that I confess I am confounded at an opinion which I have seen of Messieurs Lewis and Rawle. They seem to pare away the object of the articles to the two cases mentioned above, founding their opinion upon the maxim, that the courts of the belligerent power, are the competent tribunals to decide similar questions between that power and a neutral nation.

This maxim is true; but how can it be deemed to apply to the instance of a controversy between two nations about the interpretation of the laws of nations, and about decisions of courts founded upon an interpretation concerning which they disagreed? And this, when an extraordinary tribunal has been constituted by the joint acts of the two parties to decide their differences plainly as a substitute for a controversy by arms? Is not the constitution of such a tribunal, by the two parties, a manifest abandonment of the pretension of one to administer justice definitively through its tribunals? How can it be presumed, after such a proceeding, that the neutral power meant to be concluded by the decisions of those tribunals? Is not the reverse the obvious presumption? Why else was it not left to the British courts of Admiralty to liquidate the damages, in the admitted cases of insolvency and absconding to be paid by the government? These circumstances could call for a substitute only in *the person to pay*, not in the person, or tribunal, *which was to liquidate.* There was no need, on the principle set up, for an extraordinary tribunal to liquidate and award damages!

I confess, that the opinion referred to, appears to me destitute of color, contrary to the antecedent course of the transaction, contrary to the positive expressions of the article; and to what can reasonably be presumed to be the intention of the parties. It fritters away to nothing a very solemn and important act between two contending nations.

The exception of the cases in which justice might be obtained, in the ordinary course, appears to me to decide nothing. It might be unobtainable in that course, as well from the obstructions of positive regulations of the belligerent parties controlling the courts, and from false principles adopted by the courts, as from the inability or default of the captors. The commissioners, who are the *Court of the two nations*, are to pronounce whether justice is unobtainable, in the ordinary course, for any of these reasons. As the tribunal of both parties, they are necessarily superior to the tribunals of either. And they are the judges, in their own way, and upon their own grounds of the question, whether and when justice can or cannot be obtained in the ordinary course.

But they ought to exercise their discretion reasonably, not to abuse it; otherwise they may release the party injured from the obligation to perform.

Hence, though it is not necessary that every *individual case* of capture should be prosecuted to a decision *in the last resort*, it appears to me proper, that by such prosecution of some *one case* of the several classes of cases, it may be ascertained, by a final decision on the principle of each class, that redress cannot be obtained. Else the commissioners may object, that there has been a neglect to procure for them satisfactory evidence, that justice could not be had in the ordinary course.

I would advise, then, that our agent be instructed to lay all the cases, with the evidence, before our counsel, and to desire them to make a selection of one of each class, in which a defence can be made with probability of success, on some difference of principle, to have these cases prosecuted to an ultimate decision, and to leave all the rest pending, if possible, undecided in a course of appeal. This will give reasonable evidence to the commission-

ers, strengthened, in the view of those appointed by the other party, by the character of our counsel, who, I learn, are every way men of respectability.

The other points in your letter I shall pursue hereafter.

P. S. In a consultation on an insurance case, between our district-attorney, Mr. Burr, B. Livingston, and myself, the above points incidentally occurred, and I understood all these gentlemen as agreeing in the opinion I have stated. You are at liberty to communicate this to Mr. Pickering.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

New-York, Oct. 16th, 1795.

Sir:

About a fortnight since arrived here Mr. Tristel, with G. W. Fayette, son of the marquis. The former, who is in capacity of tutor to the latter, requested me to mention their arrival to you, and that they meant to retire to some place in the neighboring country, till they should receive some direction from you. Thus, at least, I understood him; and accordingly they are gone to a house between Hackensack and Ramapo, in the Jerseys, to which may be conveyed any letter you may confide to me for them. They are *incog.*

Having been informed you were speedily expected from Philadelphia, and being oppressed with occupation, I delayed writing till this time.

Mr. Tristel, who appears a very sedate, discreet man, informs me that they left France with permission, though not in their real characters, but in fact with the privity of some members of the Committee of Safety, who were disposed to shut their eyes and facilitate their departure.

The young Fayette also appears to me very advantageously; modest, of very good manners, and expressing himself with intelligence and propriety.

Shall I trespass on your indulgence in hazarding a sentiment upon the subject of this young gentleman? If I do, let it be ascribed to the double interest I take in a son of the marquis, and in whatever interests the good fame and satisfaction of him to whom I write.

On mature reflection, and on sounding opinions, as far as opportunity and the nature of the case have permitted, I fully believe that the President need be under no embarrassment as to any good offices his heart may lead him to perform towards this young man. It will not, I am persuaded, displease those in possession of the power of the country from which he comes, and in ours it will be singularly and generally grateful. I am even convinced, that the personal and political enemies of the President would be gratified, should his ideas of the policy of the case restrain him from that conduct which his friendship to the marquis and his feelings otherwise would dictate. The youth of this person, joined to the standing of his father, make the way easy.

I even venture to think it possible, that the time is not very remote, when the marquis will again recover the confidence and esteem of his country, when perhaps the men in power may be glad to fortify themselves and their cause with his alliance. This, however, is supposition, merely to be indulged as a reflection, not to be counted upon as a fact.

There is another subject upon which I will hazard a few words. It is, that of Mr. Randolph. I have seen the intercepted letter, which I presume led to his resignation. I read it with regret, but without much surprise—for I never had confidence in Mr. Randolph, and I thought there were very suspicious appearances about him on the occasion to which the letter particularly refers.

I perceive, that, rendered desperate himself, he meditates as much mischief as he can. The letter he calls for, I presume, is that above alluded to. His object is, if he obtains it, to prejudice others—if any part is kept back, to derive advantage to his cause from the idea, that there may be something reserved which would tend to his exculpation, and to produce suspicion that there is something which you are interested to keep from the light.

Though, from the state of public prejudices, I shall probably for one be a sufferer by the publication; yet, upon the whole, I incline to the opinion that it is most advisable the whole should come before the public. I acknowledge, that I do not express this opinion without hesitation, and therefore it will deserve, as it will no doubt engage, your mature reflection; but such is the present bias of my judgment. I am the more inclined to the opinion, as, I presume, that the subject being in part before the public, the whole letter will finally come out through the quarter by which it was written, and then it would have additional weight to produce ill impressions.

With great respect and affectionate attachment, I have the honor to be, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

New-York, [October 26, 1795.

SIR:

I have noticed a piece in the Aurora, under the signature of the "*Calm Observer*," which I think requires explanation, and I mean to give one with my name. I have written to Mr. Wolcott for materials from the books of the Treasury.

Should you think it proper to meet the vile insinuation in the close of it, by furnishing for one year the account of expenditure of the salary, I will with pleasure add what may be proper on that point. If there be any such account signed by Mr. Lear, it may be useful.

I wrote to you some days since, directed to you at Philadelphia, chiefly on the subject of young La Fayette. I mention it merely that you may have knowledge that there is such a letter, in case it has not yet come to hand.

I touched in it upon a certain *intercepted* letter. The more I have reflected, the more I am of opinion that it is advisable the whole should speedily appear.

With affection and respect,

I have the honor to be, &c.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, October 26, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have observed in the "Aurora," a piece under the signature of "*A Calm Observer*," which I think merits attention. It is my design to reply to it, with my name, but for this I wish to be furnished, *as soon as possible*, with the account of the President, and of the appropriations for him, as it stands in the Secretary's office, the Comptroller's, and the account rendered to Congress, and also the account of appropriations for this object. Of one point I am sure—that we never exceeded the *appropriations*, though we may have anticipated the *service*. Add any remarks you may judge useful. The sooner the better.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, October 27, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I wish the statements, requested in my letter of yesterday, may contain each particular payment, not aggregates for periods. It runs in my mind, that once, there being no appropriation, I procured an informal advance for the President from the bank. If this is so, let me know the time and particulars. If the account has been wound up to an exact adjustment, since the period noticed by the "*Calm Observer*," it may be useful to carry it down to that period.

I should like to have a note of other instances of advances on account of salaries.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, 29th October, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Two or three days ago, I wrote you a few lines in haste, and promised one more lengthy when I was more at leisure:—for this purpose I am now seated.

The letters from young Fayette and Mr. Frestel; my letter to Mr. Cabot, and his answer, (all of which are herein inclosed for your perusal—mine in the rough state it was first drawn, and to be returned when read,) will give you a full view of what I have already done in this affair, up to the present moment. I have unavailingly, owing to accidents, been endeavoring, through indirect means, to learn Mr. Adet's sentiments relative to the coming over of this young gentleman. But if you, after the information now given, and the reiterated assurance of what I have expressed in my letter to Mr. Cabot, and which I authorize you to repeat to him again, in the very strongest terms you can conceive, should be of opinion that I ought to go further at this time, I will do so at all events; for to be in the place of a father and friend to him, I am resolved under any circumstances. If, therefore, as I have just said, you should think that good would come from it—or even consolation therefrom to young Fayette, and his tutor, I pray you to send them hither incog., without delay, that some plan may be fixed upon: in settling of which I pray you to give me your ideas of that which shall appear most eligible, either by them, or previous to their arrival here.

Other matters which I have to communicate, shall become the subject of another letter.

I am, ever and affectionately,

Yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

PHILADELPHIA, October 29th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

A voluminous publication is daily expected from Mr. R——. The paper alluded to in the extract of his letter, of the 8th inst., and inserted in all the Gazettes, is a letter of my own, to him; from which he intends (as far as I can collect from a combination of circumstances) to prove an inconsistency in my conduct in ratifying the treaty with Great Britain, without making a rescinding (by the British government) of what is commonly called the Provision order, equally with the exception of the 12th article, by the Senate, a condition of that ratification. Intending thereby to show that my *final* decision thereon was the result of party advice; and that that party was under British influence. It being a letter of my own which he asked for, I did not hesitate a moment to furnish him therewith; and to authorize him to publish every private letter I ever wrote, and every word I ever uttered to him, if *he* thought they would contribute to his vindication. But the paper he asked for is but a mite of the volume that is to appear; for without any previous knowledge of mine he had compiled every official paper (before this was asked) for publication, the knowledge of which could subserve the purposes he has in view; and why they have not made their appearance before this, I know not, as it was intimated in the published extract of his letter to me, that nothing retarded it but the want of the paper then applied for, which was furnished the day after my arrival in this city, where, on the 20th inst., I found his letter after it had gone to Alexandria, and had returned.

I shall now touch another subject as unpleasant as the one I have just quitted. What am I to do for a Secretary of State? I ask frankly, and with solicitude; and shall receive kindly any sentiments you may express on the occasion. That there may be no concealment, and that the non-occupancy of the office until this time may be accounted for, (I tell you in confidence that,)

Mr. Paterson, of New Jersey; Mr. Thomas Johnson, of Maryland; Gen. Pinckney, of South Carolina; and Mr. Patrick Henry, of Virginia; in the order they are mentioned, have all been applied to, and refused. Would Mr. King accept it? You know the objections I have had to the nomination, to office, of any person from either branch of the Legislature, and you will be at no loss to perceive, that at the present crisis, another reason might be adduced against this appointment. But maugre all objections, if Mr. King would accept, I would look no further. Can you sound, and let me know, soon, his sentiments on this occasion? If he should feel disposed to listen to the proposition, tell him *candidly*, all that I have done in this matter; that neither he nor I may be made uneasy thereafter from the discovery of it; he will, I am confident, perceive the ground upon which I have acted, in making these essays; and will, I am persuaded, appreciate my motives. If he should decline also, pray learn with precision from him, what the qualifications of Mr. Potts, the Senator, are, and be as diffusive as you can with respect to others, and I will decide on nothing until I hear from you—pressing as the case is.

To enable you to judge of this matter with more lights still; I add, that Mr. Marshall, of Virginia, has declined the office of Attorney General, and I am pretty certain, would accept of no other, and I know that Col. Carrington would not come into the War Department (if a vacancy should happen therein). Mr. Dexter, it is said, would accept the office of Attorney-General. No person is yet absolutely fixed on for that office. Mr. Smith, of South Carolina, some time ago, would have had no objection to filling a respectable office under the General Government, but what his views might lead to, or his abilities particularly fit him for, I am an incompetent judge; and besides, on the ground of popularity, his pretensions would, I fear, be small. Mr. Chase, of Maryland, is, unquestionably, a man of abilities; and it is supposed by some that he would accept the appointment of Attorney-General. Though opposed to the adoption of the Constitution, it is said, he has been a steady friend to the general government since it is has been in operation. But he is violent-

ly opposed in his own State by a party, and is besides, or to speak more correctly, has been accused of some impurity in his conduct. I might add to this catalogue that Col. Innis is among the number of those who have passed in review; but his extreme indolence renders his abilities (great as they are said to be) of little use. In short, what with the non-acceptance of some,—the known dereliction of those who are most fit; the exceptionable drawbacks from others;—and a wish (if it were practicable) to make a geographical distribution of the great offices of the administration, I find the selection of proper characters an arduous duty.

The period is approaching, indeed is already come, for selecting the proper subjects for my communications to Congress at the opening of next session—and the manner of treating them merits more than the consideration of a moment. The crisis, and the incomplete state in which most of the important affairs of this country are at present, make the first more difficult, and the latter more delicate than usual.

The treaty with Great Britain is not yet concluded. After every consideration, however, I could bestow on it (and after entertaining very serious doubts of the propriety of doing it on account of the provision order), it has been ratified by me; what has been or will be done by the government of Great Britain, relative to it, is not now, and probably will not be known by the meeting of Congress. Yet such perhaps is the state of that business, as to make communication thereof to the legislature necessary; whether in the precise form, or to accompany it with some expression of my sense of the thing itself, and the manner in which it has been treated, merits deep reflection. If good would flow from the latter, by a just and temperate communication of my ideas to the community at large, through this medium; guarded so as not to add fuel to passions prepared to blaze, and at the same time so expressed as not to excite the criticisms or animadversions of European powers, I would readily embrace it. But, I would decidedly, avoid every expression which could be construed into a dereliction of the powers of the President with the advice and consent of the Senate to

make treaties,—or into a shrinking from any act of mine relative to it.—In a word, if a conciliatory plan can be assimilated with a firm, manly, and dignified conduct in this business, it would be desirable; but the latter I will never yield. On this head it may not be amiss to add, that no official (nor indeed other) accounts have been received from France of the reception of the treaty with Great Britain, by the national convention. Perhaps it is too soon to expect any.

Our negotiations with Spain, as far as accounts have been received from Mr. Pinckney (soon after his arrival there, but after a conference with the Duke de la Alcuden on the subject, before, however, the peace between France and that country was publicly known), stand upon the same procrastinating, trifling, undignified (as it respects that government) and insulting as it relates to this country, ground as they did at the commencement of them. Under circumstances like these, I shall be at a loss (if nothing more decisive shall arrive between this and the assembling of Congress) what to say on this subject, especially as this procrastination and trifling has been accompanied by encroachments on our territorial rights. There is no doubt of this fact; but persons have, nevertheless, been sent both by Gov. Blount and Gen. Wayne, to know by what authority it is done. The conduct of Spain (after having herself invited this negotiation, and throughout the whole of its progress) has been such, that I have, at times, thought it best to express this sentiment at once in the speech, and refer to the proceedings. At other times, to say only that matters are in the same inconclusive state they have been; and that if no alteration for the better, or a conclusion of it, should take place before the session is drawing to a close, that the proceedings will be laid fully before Congress.

From Algiers, no late accounts have been received; and little favorable, it is to be feared, is to be expected from that quarter.

From Morocco, the first communications, after our agent arrived there, were pleasing; but the final result, if any has taken place, is yet unknown—and are more clouded.

Our concerns with the Indians will tell well. I hope, and

believe, the peace with the Western Indians will be permanent, unless renewed difficulties with Great Britain should produce (as it very likely would do) a change in their conduct. But whether this matter can be mentioned in the speech with propriety, before it is advised and consented to by the Senate, is questionable; and nothing, I am sure, that is so, and is susceptible of cavil or criticism, will escape the anonymous writers, if it should go unnoticed elsewhere. It will be denominated by these gentry a bolster. All the hostile Indians to the southward have renewed the treaties of amity and friendship with the United States, and have given the best proof in their power of their sincerity, to wit, a return of prisoners and property; and peace prevails from one end of our frontier to the other. Peace also had been produced between the Creeks and Chickasaws by the intervention of this government; but something untoward and unknown here has occasioned a renewal of hostilities on the part of the Creeks.

The military establishment is of sufficient importance to claim a place in the general communication, at the opening of the session; and my opinion is, that circumstanced as things are at present, and the uncertainty of what they may be next year, it would be impolitic to reduce it, but whether to express any opinion thereon, or leave it entirely to their own decision, may be considered.

Whether a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, relative to fiscal matters, particularly on the loans of money, and another from the Secretary of War respecting the frigates, arsenals, military stores directed to be provided; and the train in which the trade with the Indians is, agreeably to the several acts of Legislature, may not be proper, and to be referred to in the speech.

Having desired the late Secretary of State to note down every matter as it occurred, proper either for the speech at the opening of the session, or for messages afterwards, the inclosed paper contains every thing I could extract from that office. Aid me, I pray you, with your sentiments on these points, and such

others as may have occurred to you relative to my communications to Congress.

With affectionate regard,
I am always yours,
GEO. WASHINGTON.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, October 29, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I send you abstracts of all the payments to the President to the present time. It is a fact that more money has been, *at times*, advanced than was due for service, but never a dollar for which there was no *appropriation*.

The villany of the suggestion against the President has induced me to reply to the "Calm Observer," on the 26th and 28th. You will see what I have said, and the inclosed papers will enable you to add any thing which you think proper. I have not time *to-day* to ascertain whether any advance by the bank was ever granted.

You know that the compensation to both Houses of Congress has been paid in advance frequently.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, October 30th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote you yesterday for a statement of the advances and appropriations for the Department of State.

I am very anxious that *Fauchet's* whole letter should appear just as it is. Strange whispers are in circulation of a nature

foreign to truth, and implicating honest men with rascals. Is it to come out? Can't you send me a copy? I will observe any condition you annex.

The secret journals, and other files of the Department of State, will disclose the following facts:—

That during the war, a commission to negotiate a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, was given to Mr. Adams, and afterwards revoked.

That our commissioners for making peace were instructed to take no step whatever, without a previous consultation with the French ministry, though there was, at the time, reason to believe that France wished us to make peace, or truce, with Great Britain, without an acknowledgment of our independence; that she favored a sacrifice to Spain, of our pretensions to the navigation of the Mississippi, and the relinquishment of a participation in the fisheries.

It will appear that instructions were actually given to Mr. Jay, to yield the navigation of the Mississippi to Spain, in consideration of an acknowledgment of our independence. That Mr. Jay made a proposal accordingly, but clogged with some condition, or qualification, to bring it back to Congress before a final conclusion; and expostulated with Congress against the measure.

It will appear that this was effected by a southern party, who would also have excluded the fisheries from being an ultimatum; in which they were opposed by the north, who equally contended for Mississippi and fisheries.

It will appear that Chancellor Livingston, as Secretary of State, reported a censure on our commissioners, for breaking their instructions in the negotiations for peace.

It will appear that shortly after the arrival, in this country, of the preliminary articles, I made a motion in Congress, to renew the commissions to negotiate a treaty of commerce with Great Britain; that a committee was appointed to prepare one, with instructions, of which Mr. Madison was one; and that the committee never reported.

Thus stand the facts in my memory.

It is very desirable, now that a free access to the files of the Department can give the evidence, to examine them accurately, noting times, places, circumstances, actors, &c. I want this very much, for a public use, in my opinion essential.

It would also be useful to have a copy of Mr. Jefferson's letter to Congress, concerning the transfer of the French debt to private money-lenders, on which the report of the Board of Treasury is founded.

Yours, truly, &c.

Nov. 12. This letter, by accident, has lain in my desk since it was written. I send it still. Bache's paper of the eleventh has a VALERIUS, which I think gives an opportunity of oversetting him. The leading ideas may be,—

Firstly—He discloses the object of the party to place Mr. Jefferson in contrast with the President.

Secondly—He discloses the further object, an intimate and close alliance with France, to subject us to the vortex of European politics, and attributes it to Mr. Jefferson.

Thirdly—He misrepresents totally Mr. Jefferson's returning from France.

A solid answer to this paper, *with facts*, would do great good.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, November 2, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I inclose a statement of the President's account quarterly, which shows that he has not been in advance a *quarter's salary* at any time.

You will see that the Aurora denies that the members of Congress have ever received moneys which were *not earned*, and refers to a letter of mine to prove the fact. I never wrote a

letter on the subject, except to the speakers, Muhlenburgh and Trumbull, in answer to an application from them on this point: "*Whether any advances that had been made to members of the House of Representatives beyond their real pay had been afterwards accounted for in their subsequent accounts in a succeeding session?*"

To this I answered to the following effect:

"It is certain that the Speakers of the House have in no instance advanced moneys beyond the compensation claimed by the members as actually due, of course it does not appear to have been designed in any case that moneys advanced in one session, should be accounted for by services to be rendered in another."

"In the accounts of the second session of the first Congress, two errors were discovered of six dollars each, and one other of eighty-five dollars, which sums were overpaid in consequence of miscalculations. These sums were credited by the members who received the moneys in the succeeding session in consequence of notes which were placed in the pay books by the clerks who made the examination."

"A few other errors of a trivial nature have at different times been noted as errors by the clerks, but whether they have been explained by the members, or accounted for, does not appear from the pay books. The foregoing three cases are all that I can find, which fall within the inquiry contained in your letter."

The plain meaning of my letter is, that it was not the practice to advance *during a session*, more than was earned in *that session*, further I never meant, or examined the books to ascertain. I shall do it now.

The reference to this letter proves either that Muhlenburgh is party to this business, or, what is more likely, that my letter was lodged in the clerk's office, and that *Beckly* and *Randolph* are the authors of this attack.

Nothing to the purpose can be gained from the accounts of the Secretary of State, but you will find them inclosed. It is not fit to use them, in my opinion.

N. B.—What I say of my own letter to M. and F., is for *your* information. I shall use the affair here.

The clerks have disappointed me, and I cannot send the statement of the Department of State claims till to-morrow.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

New-York, November 5th, 1795.

Sir:

I received on the second instant, your two letters of the 29th of October, with the inclosures. An answer has been delayed, to ascertain the disposition of Mr. King, who, through the summer, has resided in the country, and is only occasionally in town. I am now able to inform you,—*he would not accept.* Circumstances of the moment conspire with the disgust which a virtuous and independent mind feels at placing itself *en but* to the foul and venomous shafts of calumny, which are continually shot by an odious confederacy against virtue, to give Mr. King a decided disinclination to the office.

I wish, sir, I could present to you any useful ideas as a substitute. But the embarrassment is extreme, as to the Secretary of State. An Attorney-General, I believe, may easily be fixed upon by a satisfactory choice. Either Mr. *Dexter*, or Mr. *Gore*, would answer. They are both men of undoubted probity. Mr. Dexter has most *natural* talent, and is strong in his particular profession. Mr. Gore, I believe, is equally considered in his profession, and has more various information. No good man doubts Mr. Gore's purity, but he has made money by agencies for British houses in the recovery of debts, &c., and by operations in the funds, which a certain party object to him. I believe Mr. Dexter is free from every thing of this kind. Mr. King thinks *Gore* on the whole preferable. I hesitate between them. Either will, I think, be a good appointment.

But for a Secretary of State I know not what to say. *Smith*, though not of full size, is very respectable for talent, and has pretty various information. I think he has more *real talent* than

the last incumbent of the office. But there are strong objections to his appointment. I fear he is of an uncomfortable temper: he is popular with no description of men, from a certain *hardness* of character, and he, more than most other men, is considered as tinctured with prejudices towards the British. In this particular, his ground is somewhat peculiar. It may suit party views to say much of other men, but more in this respect is *believed* with regard to Smith. I speak merely as to *bias* and *prejudice*. There are things, and important things, for which I would recommend Smith; thinking well of his abilities, information, and industry, and integrity,—but at the present juncture, I believe, his appointment to the office in question would be unadvisable.

Besides it is very important that he should not now be removed from the House of Representatives.

I have conferred with Mr. King with respect to Mr. Potts; we both think well of his principles, and consider him as a man of good sense. But he is of a cast of character ill suited to such an appointment, and is not *extensive*, either as to talents or information. It is also a serious question, whether the Senate at this time ought to be weakened.

Mr. Innis, I fear, is too absolutely lazy for Secretary of State. The objection would weigh less as Attorney-General.

The following characters, in the narrowness of the *probable* circle, as to willingness, have occurred to me. Judge Pendleton, of Georgia; Mr. Desaussure (late Director of the Mint), of South Carolina; Governor Lee, or Mr. Lee, late Collector of Alexandria, of Virginia; McHenry, of Maryland. *I mean the doctor.*

Judge Pendleton writes well; is of respectable abilities, and a gentleman-like smooth man. If I were sure of his political views, I should be much disposed to adopt his appointment under the circumstances, but I fear he has been somewhat tainted with the prejudices of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, and I have afflicting suspicions concerning these men. Desaussure, I believe, has considerable talents, is of gentleman-like manners, good views, and only wants sufficient standing, to put him upon a footing with any attainable man.

Governor Lee has several things for him and several against

him; he ought to have a good secretary under him. His brother I only know enough of to think him worth considering.

McHenry you know. He would give no strength to the administration, but he would not disgrace the office; his views are good; perhaps his health, &c., would prevent his accepting.

I do not know Judge Bee; I have barely thought of him.

In fact, a first-rate character is not attainable. A second-rate must be taken with good dispositions and barely decent qualifications. I wish I could throw more light. 'Tis a sad omen for the government.

By the fifteenth I will carefully attend to the other parts of your letters. I regret that bad health and a pressure of avocations will permit nothing earlier.

With the most respectful and affectionate attachment,

I have the honor to remain, Sir, &c.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, November 10th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the 5th has been duly received, but nothing was said in it of young Fayette. I am willing, as I said in my last, to receive him under any circumstances, or in any manner you may conceive best; and wish to know what that is.

Having since I wrote to you on the 29th ult. received more agreeable, though not conclusive accounts from abroad, I pray you to suspend your superstructure until you receive a ground plan from me, which shall be in a few days, with better, or at least with more ample materials.

Yours always,

And very affectionately,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, November 15th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

At length I am able to send you the explanation I mentioned to you. The papers upon which it is founded are returned, that you may compare, and if necessary, correct. You may, by altering the body, or by a note, rectify any inaccuracy.

You will observe marks in the margin which will require particular attention. (A.) Let the distance, if not so now, be rightly stated. (B.) Insert the most usual sum or sums. I think it was 10,000 to Senate, 20,000 to House of Representatives. (C.) If you think it best you may leave out here, and afterwards, all that concerns the instruction referring the commencement of the compensation to the 4th of March, 1789. I think, in this respect, something will depend on the question whether the Treasury has finally taken its ground, and even then a note at foot, as after closing the letter, may be considered instead of striking out. Do as you please on this point. (F.) Examine the calculation that gives this balance.

I will thank you to have a proof-sheet brought you. You observe the quarterly statement is to be subjoined. Will it not be best that the Register should sign it?

Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 16th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

The papers herewith inclosed are so full on the subject of my former request, that nothing more remains than to refer to them for every information I can give, as the groundwork of the

superstructure you are to build. When you are done with them, be so good as to return the whole to me again, with those sent before, together with the letters respecting young Fayette—and the result relative to him.

I would beg the favor of you to run your eye over the letter from Madam de Segur, and let one of your young men make some inquiry into the truth of her narrative, and if found just, to seal and forward my letter to her, safely. The reason why I give you this trouble, is, that applications of the kind have been and still are very frequent; and in more instances than one, impositions have been practised on me. If this lady's tale be true, her case is pitiable; and I have only to regret that the frequent calls upon my private purse render it inconvenient for me to do more for her than the pittance I inclose to her.

With sincere and affectionate esteem and regard,

I am ever yours,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S.—Be so good as to drop me a single line, merely to say that this letter and its inclosures have got safely into your hands.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 16th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I sent you on Saturday an important translation of Fauchet's letter. I now send you a copy of the original. You may at your discretion use the letter, except causing copies to be taken or suffering it to be printed.

Mr. Randolph has extensively circulated a letter in which he attributes his disgrace to the artifices of a "British faction." This letter is accompanied with an explanatory certificate from Fauchet, written at Newport, which I have not seen. I am told,

however, by persons who have seen it, that it is a weak, evasive performance, and only makes bad worse. When the affair was opened to Randolph, he denied having received money, or having made any proposition relative to money, except on one occasion, which was this:

He said that in the summer of 1794, *Fauchet told him that there was a meeting of persons in New-York consisting among others of Mr. Hammond and Mr. Jaudines, who were conspiring to destroy him* (*R.*) *and Governor Clinton.* Being asked what he meant by *destroying him and Governor Clinton*, Randolph answered, to destroy his character as Secretary of State, and Governor Clinton's, as Governor of New-York. Randolph said, that he then inquired whether proof could be got of this conspiracy, and that after some conversation he suggested to Mr. Fauchet, that as he (F.) *had the resources of the French government at command, he could obtain* the proof. This foolish story could make no impression, and though Mr. Randolph promised to reduce it to writing, he omitted to do so.

There are reports in circulation, I find, which change the complexion of this first declaration of Randolph's, and represent the *conspiracy* as one to *ruin France.*

I also *suspect* that attempts will be made to represent you as concerned in it, but of this I am not certain. At any rate, the whole is idle nonsense, and Fauchet's attempt, by a posterior act, to invalidate the evidence of a confidential letter, will not succeed. What must have been the footing of those men when they could familiarly talk about the subversion of the government, and inviting the French to aid the insurrection with money.

Pray let me know if the letters are received.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, November 17th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The interest you take in all public measures of importance, and the peculiar solicitude you must feel at this time of general agitation, when so many are busy, apparently, to undermine the government which you so effectually labored to establish, and have so eminently contributed to maintain, induce me, with that sincerity which I trust has ever marked my character, and that frankness which an entire confidence in your judgment and candor inspires, to exhibit to your view the present situation of the great public offices.

Near three months have elapsed since the office of Secretary of State became vacant. At that moment, matters of magnitude respecting the treaty with Great Britain demanded attention, and the general business of the office could not be suspended. With the President's approbation, I undertook the conduct of whatever required the uninterrupted agency of that officer—hoping, however, to have been relieved long ere this time from the burthen. The President, I know, took immediate measures to fill the office. He first tendered it to Judge Patterson, then to Governor Johnson of Maryland, to General Pinckney, and to Mr. King, in succession; and by all it has been refused. The three former nominations the President early communicated to me, but the last he did not mention till about six days ago; nor, indeed, till then, had he spoken of *the subject* since his last return from Mount Vernon. He recited these attempts to fill the office of Secretary of State, and that finally he had, through Colonel Carrington, made a tender of it to Patrick Henry, who also declined it. In the event of this repulse, he proposed to Colonel Carrington's acceptance the Department of War, under the idea of removing me to the Department of State. Colonel Carrington chose to remain where he is. The President having given this detail, made me the tender. I declined it, as not possessing the talent so much to be desired in a Secretary of State, in the propriety and abil-

ity of whose conduct the dignity as well as the interests of the nation were so materially involved. On various grounds the President urged my acceptance; and after the many fruitless endeavors he had used to fill the office, I felt reluctant to give him a denial. I promised to consider of it.

The same day Mr. Wolcott called upon me. I found he had been consulted. I related what had passed, and he pressed me to accept the office; but I remained undecided. We repeatedly conversed about it afterwards. I still wished the office in abler hands. Last Friday evening, going to see Mrs. Washington, I found the President and Mr. Wolcott in the antechamber, the President's countenance manifestly uneasy. As soon as an opportunity offered, I spoke to Mr. Wolcott. The President was anxious for my determination, and again Mr. Wolcott urged me to take the office. I reflected a few minutes; the company retired; and I then made the President the following declaration:

That I wished to keep him no longer in suspense, and that I would accept the office of Secretary of State; but as I had no ambitious views, and fresh embarrassments might arise in his attempts to fill the Department of War, I would propose, with submission to his opinion, that things should remain for the present as they were; I would continue my attention to both departments; if that of War could be filled to his satisfaction, I would go to the Department of State; if a character well adapted to the latter should present, I would remain where I was. In one word, to free him from all embarrassment, I would serve in one office or the other, as the public good should require. The President answered, "That is very liberal," and desired me to call the next morning to consider of a successor in the Department of War.

The President had examined his list of officers in the late war, and selected the most prominent characters, whose names you will find in the inclosed list. Of these you will see but few to be recommended for the office, especially to the southward of Pennsylvania, where, of choice, the President would name one. With ample military talents, General Lee is conceived to want others essential to a Secretary of War. Embracing some great objects, the department comprehends a multitude of details, and

demands economy in its numerous expenditures. This appointment would doubtless be extremely unpopular. It would be disapproved by the enemies of the government without acquiring the confidence of its friends. These ideas I have already suggested to the President. Expressing his earnest desire to find a gentleman southward of Pennsylvania, the President remarked, that it would be much less difficult to choose one from the other side of this State. But even there the object may perhaps be found not very easy to accomplish.

The State of New-York has not now one officer *on the general staff of government.* Colonel William North, you will see, is on the President's list. I have thought favorably of his character and abilities, but am not sufficiently acquainted to form any decisive opinion; you must know him well: will you have the goodness to express your mind? Will you consider the whole list? Will you indulge me with your sentiments on all the subjects of this letter? One other idea ought perhaps to be taken into view. The President, beyond all doubt, will, at the close of his present term, retire for ever from public life. We do not know who will succeed him. Our internal politics, and our exterior relations, may be deeply affected by the character and principles of the President, and the Secretary of State.

The tenor of this letter shows that it is *perfectly confidential.* The President has no knowledge of it; he will be impatient to decide to whom the department of war shall be tendered. I shall therefore be anxious to receive your answer. I earnestly hope your health and business will allow you to put it into the mail of Friday, that it may reach me on Saturday.

With the truest respect.

P. S.—Mr. Wolcott informed me of your wish to see Mr. Fauchet's letter. I furnished him with a French copy of it, and with my translation, to be copied, and forwarded for your revision and correction. I was sorry to propose this labor for you; but the letter is of no small importance. It must soon be published, and you are implicated in every page. I therefore wish the translation may be exact.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 18th November, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Having *no* doubt that the petition contained in the inclosed gazette will make its appearance in the Virginia Assembly; and *nearly* as little of its favorable reception in that body, I resolved to give you the perusal of it at this moment.

But my principal view in writing to you now is, to request that you would desire young Fayette and his tutor to proceed to this place without delay; having resolved, unless some powerful reasons can be suggested to the contrary, to take them at once into my family.

The young gentleman must have experienced some unpleasant feelings already from being kept at a distance from me, and I feel as unpleasantly as he can do, from the same cause.

Very sincerely and affectionately,

I am yours,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, November 19, 1795.

SIR:

Your letters of the 16th and 18th instant, with the inclosures, are received.

An extraordinary pressure of professional business has delayed my reply on the subject of young La Fayette, in which another cause co-operated. I wished, without unveiling the motives incidentally, to sound the impressions of other persons of judgment, who, I know, had been apprised of his being in the country.

The bias of my inclination has been that you should proceed as your letter of yesterday proposes, and I cannot say it is changed, though it is weakened. For I find that in other minds,

and judicious ones, a doubt is entertained, whether at the actual crisis it would be prudent to give *publicity* to your protection of him. It seems to be feared, that the factious might use it as a weapon to represent you as a favorer of the anti-revolutionists of France; and it is inferred that it would be inexpedient to furnish at this moment any aliment to their slanders.

These ideas have enough of foundation and importance to make me question my own impressions, which, from natural disposition, are in similar cases much to be distrusted.

I shall therefore do nothing more at present than write to La Fayette and his preceptor to come to New-York, and I shall forbear any definitive communication to them till I hear further from you, after you have reflected on the information I now give.

Should you on reconsideration conclude on yielding to the doubt as a matter of greater caution—perhaps it will be then left for you to write young La Fayette a letter, affectionate as your feelings will naturally lead you to make it, announcing your resolution to be to him a parent and friend, but mentioning that very peculiar circumstances of the moment impose on you the necessity of deferring the gratification of your wishes for a personal interview, desiring him at the same time to concert with me a plan of disposing of himself satisfactorily and advantageously in the mean time. I shall with pleasure execute any commands you may give me on the subject. The papers respecting this matter are herewith returned. I shall without delay attend to all the others.

Very respectfully and affectionately,
I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 23d, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Inclosed are letters for Mr. de La Fayette and his tutor. I leave them open for your perusal; and notwithstanding the re-

quest in my letter of the 18th, I shall cheerfully acquiesce in any measures respecting them which you (and others with whom you may be disposed to consult) may deem most eligible.

As there can be no doubt that the feelings of both are alive to every thing which may have the semblance of neglect or slight; and, indeed, expectant as they must have been, (without adverting perhaps to the impediments,) of an invitation to fly to me without delay, and distressing and forlorn as the situation of one of them is, it is necessary that every assurance and consolation should be administered to them. For these reasons, I pray you to send my letters to them by express, the expense of which I will repay with thankfulness.

The doubt which you have expressed of the propriety of an open and avowed conduct in me towards the son of Mr. de La Fayette, and the subject it might afford to malignancy to misinterpret the cause, has so much weight, that I am distrustful of my own judgment in deciding on this business, lest my feelings should carry me further than prudence (while I am a public character) will warrant. It has, however, like many other things in which I have been involved—two edges, neither of which can be avoided without falling on the other. On one side, I may be charged with countenancing those who have been denounced the enemies of France; on the other, with *not* countenancing the son of a man who is dear to America.

When I wrote to you last, I had resolved to take both the pupil and tutor into my own family, supposing it would be most agreeable to the young gentleman, and congenial with friendship; at the same time that it would have given me more command over him, been more convenient, and less expensive to myself than to board them out. But now, as I have intimated before, I confide the matter entirely to your decision, after seeing and conversing with them.

Mr. Adet has been indirectly sounded on the coming over of the family of Fayette *generally*, but not as to the exact point; his answer was, that as France did not make war upon women and children, he did not suppose that their emigration could excite any notice. The case, however, might be different, if one of

them (with his tutor, whose character, conduct, and principles may, for aught I know to the contrary, be very obnoxious) was brought into my family, and of course, into the company that visited it. But as all these things will be taken into consideration by you, I shall not dwell upon them, and only add that,

With esteem, regard, and sincere affection,

I am ever yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

P. S. I have no doubt but that young Fayette and his tutor might be boarded at German Town or in the vicinity of this city, and would be at hand to receive assistance and advice as occasion might require, although he might not be a resident under my roof.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, November 28th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

If indisposition or business of a pressing nature should have prevented you looking into, and making a digest of the papers I sent you on the 16th inst., I pray you to return them to me by the *first* post after this letter is received.

The meeting of Congress is near at hand—and there is good reason to expect a punctual attendance of the members. I should be extremely unwilling, therefore, to be unprepared for this event; and shall endeavor to work the materials (no copy of which I have by me) into the best form I am able, so soon as I get them, if it is yet to do.

You omitted in your last to inclose the letters of Mr. Fayette, his tutor, and Mr. Cabot to me, and the copy of mine to the latter. I beg they may accompany the other papers.

I am always and affectionately yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

P. S. I had written the foregoing letter to go by young Mr.

Jay this morning, but he having postponed his journey, I now add, that your letter of the 26th came to me by the mail of to-day without the papers, or any mention thereof, which (as I requested, if you could possibly make it convenient to let me have them by the 24th) has given me a good deal of alarm, lest they should have been intrusted to a private hand, who may be dilatory—or may have met with some other mischance on the way.

Did my letter to young Fayette, under cover to you, get to hand in time to be presented to him at the interview you had with him? My desire of seeing, and assuring him from my own mouth of my fixed determination to be his friend and supporter, is such, that I hardly know how to reconcile to my feelings the denial of permitting him to come hither for a few moments to receive it. But, supposing that whatsoever you decide will be for the best, I shall acquiesce therein.

Yours,
G. W.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, December 1st, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have not been able to ascertain all the points upon which you requested me to write to you.

In February, 1780, a committee reported a conference with the minister of France, the substance of which was,—That the king of Spain wished for an alliance with the United States, but that it was necessary that the United States should explain their claims precisely.

That the cabinet of Madrid construed the western rights of the United States to extend no further westward than the line of settlement permitted by the British proclamation of 1763.

That the United States had no right to navigate the Mississippi.

That the king of Spain would conquer Florida for himself.

And that the lands westward of the line of 1763 were proper subjects of conquests by Spain, from Great Britain.

The French minister said, that his Most Christian Majesty was united by ties of blood to the king of Spain, and to the United States by treaty and friendship, and that he would endeavor to conciliate the differences of opinion with liberality, &c.

There are many intimations in the French conferences, exhorting the United States to *moderation* in their claims. It was stated that France might not be able to obtain an *implicit* acknowledgment of independence, in which case the United States ought to consider whether a *tacit* acknowledgment ought not to be accepted.

There are intimations at several times that Mr. Adams required *positive instructions* to prevent him from acting too inflexibly, &c., &c., (this is the idea, not the expression.)

June 11th, 1781. Mr. Adams was instructed thus,—"to make the most candid and confidential communications upon all subjects to the ministers of our previous ally, the King of France, to undertake nothing in the negotiations for peace or truce, without their knowledge and concurrence, and *ultimately to govern yourself by their advice and opinion, endeavoring* in your whole conduct, to make them sensible how much we rely upon his majesty's influence for effectual support in every thing that may be necessary for the present security or future prosperity of the United States of America."

It is worthy of remark, that the draft of instruction was communicated to the French minister, and the words scored with a line underneath, inserted afterwards by way of amendment.

I send Chancellor Livingston's draft of a treaty with England; it furnishes good matter for testing the opinions of Cato by a nib of authority for himself.

You will judge of the manner of using these hints. Perhaps, under present circumstances, they ought only to be considered as information, from which to state facts and reason. You will hear from me on other points, when I can get time.

I lately requested a corrected translation of a document which I sent to you. I hope it reached you.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, December 14, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

The printer of Mr. Randolph's vindication, advertises that it will be published next Friday. The translation of Fauchet's letter will be in it. This translation was made by Mr. Taylor, at Randolph's request; but Mr. Taylor, who desired the use of mine, told me that he had made but few variations. Now if I have mistaken the sense in any material passages, it is highly probable that they will be transferred to Mr. Taylor's translation; or Mr. Taylor may mistake the meaning of some passages, to which he will always be liable, from the want of a comprehensive view of his subject. I have met with such instances in his other translations; although he is more familiar with the French than I am Now it seems to me important, that the first translation of Fauchet's letter that shall be published, should convey its true meaning. And therefore I wish earnestly that yours, or the one you are correcting, may be returned by to-morrow's post (if not already on its way), that it may be printed in Fenno's paper before the vindication appears.

HAMILTON TO KING.

Dec. 14th, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

An extraordinary press of occupation has delayed an answer to your letter on the subject of Mr. R. Though it may come too late, I comply with your request as soon as I can.

The subject is truly a perplexing one; my mind has several times fluctuated. If there was nothing in the case but his imprudent sally upon a certain occasion, I should think the reasons

for letting him pass would outweigh those for opposing his passage. But if it be really true that he is sottish, or that his mind is otherwise deranged, or that he has exposed himself by improper conduct in pecuniary transactions, the bias of my judgment would be to negative. And as to the fact, I would satisfy myself by careful inquiry of persons of character who may have had an opportunity of knowing.

It is now, and, in certain probable events, will still more be of infinite consequence that our judiciary should be well composed. Reflection upon this in its various aspects weighs heavily upon my mind against Mr. R. upon the accounts I have received of him, and balances very weighty considerations the other way.

P. S.—From what a Mr. Wadsworth, lately in Philadelphia, tells me of a conversation between Burr, Baldwin, and Gallatin, it would seem that the two last gentlemen have made up their minds to consider the treaty, if ratified by Great Britain, as *conclusive upon the House of Representatives.* I thought it well this should be known to you, if not before understood from any other quarter.

KING TO HAMILTON.

16th December, 1795.

I send you Dunlap of this morning. In it you have the foreign intelligence. Fenno, Dunlap, and others, have erroneously stated, that Mr. Warden brought the ratification of Great Britain. No official dispatch has been received. Rutledge was negatived yesterday by the Senate. From present appearances, the address to the President by the House, will pass without a debate. The draft has been, by agreement in the Committee who reported it, shaped so as to reserve all points intended to be discussed relative to the treaty. The words underscored in the

inclosed draft, were offered in the Committee by Mr. Madison, who agreed to concur in the paragraph, if they were added. You perceive the object.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 22d Dec., 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

Have you seen or heard more of young Fayette, since you last wrote to me on that subject? Where did he go to? Did you deliver him the letter I sent, under cover to you for him? His case gives me pain, and I do not know how to get relieved from it. His sensibility, I fear, is hurt, by his not acknowledging the receipt of my letter to him; and yet, if considerations of a higher nature are opposed to a more uncovert countenance, it must be submitted to. If he wants money, I am ready to furnish it.

Ere this, I presume, you have seen the long promised vindication, or rather accusation. What do you think of it; and what notice should be taken of it? You are fully acquainted with my sentiments relative to the rival and warring powers of F—— and E——; and have heard as strong sentiments from me with respect to both, as ever he did. His declaration that he was always opposed to the commercial part of the negotiation, is as impudent and insolent an assertion, as it is false; if he means more than that it was contingent, (as the instructions to Mr. Jay declare,) and to apply the knowledge of it to me. But if you have seen his performance, I shall leave you to judge of it without any comments of mine.

With much sincerity and truth,
I am always and affectionately,
Yours,
GEO. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, December 24, 1795.

SIR:

I have received your letter of the ——.

Young La Fayette is now with me. I had before made an offer of money in your name, and have repeated it; but the answer is, that they are not as yet in want, and will have recourse when needed.

Young La Fayette appears melancholy, and has grown thin. A letter lately received from his mother, which speaks of something which she wishes him to mention to you (as I learn from his preceptor), has quickened his sensibility, and increased his regret. If I am satisfied that the present state of things is likely to occasion a durable gloom, endangering the health, and in some sort the mind of the young man, I shall conclude, on the strength of former permission, to send him to you for a short visit; the rather, as upon repeated reflection, I am not able to convince myself that there is any real inconvenience in the step, and as there are certainly delicate opposite sides. But it will be my endeavor to make him content to remain away.

I have read with care Mr. Randolph's pamphlet. It does not surprise me. I consider it as amounting to a confession of guilt; and I am persuaded this will be the universal opinion. His attempts against you are viewed by all whom I have seen, as base. They will certainly fail of their aim, and will do good, rather than harm, to the public cause and to yourself. It appears to me that, by you, no notice can be, or ought to be taken of the publication. It contains its own antidote.

I perceive that Mr. Fauchet, and with him Mr. Randolph, have imputed to me the having asked to *accompany you* on the western expedition.

The true course of the fact was as follows:—You had mentioned, and that early in the affair, *as a question for consideration*, the propriety and expediency of your going out with the militia. But no opinion had been given to you, and you had not an-

nounced *any determination* on the point when my letter to you, of the 19th of September, was written. That letter does not ask to *accompany you*, but to be permitted to go on the expedition. A short time after it was sent, you mentioned to me that you had concluded to go as far as Carlisle in the first instance, and to take your ulterior determination according to circumstances, and proposed to me to accompany you.

My request was independent of your going or not going. Its objects were,—1st. That mentioned in my letter. 2d. An anxious desire that, by being present, I might have it in my power, in a case very interesting to my department, as well as the government generally, to promote, in the event of your not going on the expedition, a course of conduct the best calculated to obviate impediments, and secure its object. I had serious fears of treachery in Governor Mifflin, and I thought that even Lee might miss the policy of the case in some particulars, &c., &c.

These were the considerations that determined me, and not the little cunning policy by which Mr. Fauchet supposes me to have been governed.

I greatly miscalculate if a strong and general current does not now set in favor of the government, on the question of the treaty.

With true respect and attachment, &c.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 26th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Cutting has given to me a perusal of his papers, respecting his agency in relieving our seamen from British impress. He wished my opinion *professionally* respecting the validity of his claim, which I declined to give, because it would contradict certain maxims I have prescribed to myself with regard to public questions pending while I was part of the administration.

But there are reasons which induce me to convey to you privately my view of the subject.

It appears to me clearly established that Mr. Cutting rendered a very meritorious and an important service to the United States. Its value is not to be estimated merely by the number of persons relieved, but by the influence of the exertion upon other cases —indeed upon our trade generally with the English ports at the juncture. It is also a service very interesting to the feelings of all our citizens—and there was certainly much good zeal and address displayed upon the occasion. It sufficiently appears, too, that the nature of the case must have involved considerable expense, and in ways which frequently would not admit of after authentication.

Under these circumstances I feel a strong impression that it is of the policy as well as of the justice of the government to go lengths in giving satisfaction to Mr. Cutting. 'Tis a case which calls for liberality, not scrupulous or prying investigation. Mr. Cutting's own testimony from necessity ought to be received as to expenditures. This observation, to be sure, has reasonable limits. But still the case demands that the testimony should be received with influential effect.

Mr. Dorhman is an example of similar compensation in circumstances not unlike. Our own citizen has not an inferior claim.

What has been hitherto done for Mr. Cutting appears to be manifestly inadequate. If it could be supposed that there was risk of doing too much, it is of the reputation of the government that the error should be on that side. Care ought to be taken that a zealous citizen, who has rendered real service, should not be out of pocket, and out of reputation, too, by his bargain. I include a reasonable compensation for service as well as reimbursement of expenses.

These ideas will, I am sure, be received as they are intended

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

December, 1795.

SIR:

I have the pleasure to send you inclosed two letters, one from young La Fayette, the other from his preceptor. They appear reconciled to some further delay.

I take the liberty to inclose a copy of a letter to the Secretary of State respecting Mr. Cutting. I do not know upon the whole what sort of a man Mr. Cutting is; but as to the particular subject of his claim, I really think it deserves an indulgent consideration, and that it is expedient and right to favor it to a liberal extent. Some reflections have made me think it advisable to place the matter under your eye. Neither the Secretary of State nor Mr. Cutting will be informed of this.

I wrote you a few lines two or three days ago in answer to your letter concerning Mr. Randolph's pamphlet.

Your very respectful and affectionate servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO KING.

January, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

If the newspapers tell truth, it would appear that Massachusetts has anticipated New-York. But it is intended by our friends in the Legislature, to give some pointed discountenance to the propositions. It was expected that it would have been done to-day, but by the divergings of some men who seek popularity with both sides, they have gotten into an unnecessary debate upon the proposition in detail, which will lose time; but in the result a handsome majority will do right.

Lawrance is hurt, and as far as I see, not without some rea-

son, from particular circumstances, at being left out of the direction of the bank. It will be balm to his feelings to be put into the direction of the office here, and I believe it will be an improvement of the direction to do it. I wish you would endeavor to bring it about. Speak to Bayard of our city and to Wharton of Philadelphia. This is a suggestion of my own, for Lawrance rather rides a high horse upon the occasion.

Yours, truly.

DAYTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 15, 1796.

The short interrogatory respecting our political prospect with which you conclude your letter, cannot be answered in as few words. Our session has hitherto been remarkably tranquil, but we can have no security that it will continue so much longer. That instrument, the cause of so much pleasure to some, and of displeasure to others,—that compact, which has already drawn forth so many pens, and occasioned so much warmth—the treaty (as ratified), has for some time past been impatiently expected, and will, when it arrives and is laid before the house, produce, or I err exceedingly, agitations, collisions, and oppositions, the extent of which cannot be foreseen or calculated.

Yours, with sincere esteem, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, January 15th, 1796.

SIR:

The question upon the constitutionality of the act imposing duties on carriages, will, I expect, be determined by the Supreme Court the next month. I request you, if possible, to attend the

trial as counsel for the United States. Mr. Lee, the Attorney-General, is now here, and will be able to inform you of the time when the trial will come on, and will concert with you the measures proper to be pursued.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, January 19, 1796.

SIR:

Mrs. De Neuville, widow of Mr. De Neuville, formerly of Holland, lately passed through this city. On her way she called upon me, and announced her intention to make application to Congress, on the ground of the political services rendered the United States by her husband, as, in fact, a principal cause of his pecuniary misfortunes, and expressed a wish that I would lay the case under your eye. I told her that your situation did not permit you to take an agency in similar matters, depending before Congress, and that you was very delicate on such subjects. She replied, that you might perhaps indirectly promote her cause, and that from a letter from you to her husband, she was encouraged to think you would be disposed to befriend her. I yielded at last to female importunity, and promised to mention the matter. I do not know what the case admits of, but, from papers which she showed me, it would seem that she has pretensions on the kindness of this country.

Our merchants here are becoming very uneasy on the subject of the French captures and seizures. They are certainly very perplexing and alarming, and present an evil of a magnitude to be intolerable, if not shortly remedied. My anxiety to preserve peace with France is known to you; and it must be the wish of every prudent man that no honorable expedient for avoiding a rupture be omitted. Yet there are bounds to all things. This country cannot see its trade an absolute prey to France without resistance. We seem to be where we were with Great Britain,

when Mr. Jay was sent there; and I cannot discern but that the spirit of the policy, then pursued with regard to England, will be the proper one now in respect to France (viz.): a solemn and final appeal to the justice and interest of France; and if this will not do, measures of self-defence. Any thing is better than absolute humiliation. France has already gone much further than Great Britain ever did.

I give vent to my impressions on this subject, though I am persuaded your own reflections cannot materially vary.

With respectful and affectionate attachment,

I have the honor to remain, Sir,

Your very obedient servant, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

January 19, 1796.

SIR:

The bearer of this letter is Doctor Bolman, whom you have heard of, as having made an attempt for the relief of the Marquis La Fayette, which very nearly succeeded. The circumstances of this affair, as stated by Doctor Bolman and Mr. Huger, son of B. Huger, of South Carolina, deceased, who assisted, do real credit to the prudence, management, and enterprise of the doctor, and show that he is a man of sense and energy.

He appears to have been induced to think that he attempted a service which would strongly recommend him to the *favor* of this country; in which idea I have reason to believe that Mr. Pinckney, among others, encouraged him; and as a consequence of it, he hopes for some civil employment under our government. His expectations of what he may begin with are not high, it being principally his object to obtain some present provision in a way which may lead him, if he discovers talents, to something better. He appears to be a man of education, speaks several languages, converses sensibly, is of polite manners, and, I dare say, has the materials of future advancement.

I have not left him unapprised of the difficulties in his way; but he concludes to go to Philadelphia to ascertain what is, or is not possible, relying at least on a kind reception from you.

He brought me letters from Mr. and Mrs. Church, which speak handsomely of him. I believe they had a chief agency in promoting his undertaking.

At his request, I give him this letter to you,

With respectful and affectionate attachment.

P. S. The Doctor is a German.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, February 25, 1796.

SIR:

The evening I had last the pleasure of seeing you, you asked my opinion whether any and what measures might be taken with the Senate, with reference to the treaty with Great Britain, in the event of its not arriving before the adjournment of the legislature.

I mentioned as a hasty thought, that I feared it would be impracticable to detain them long in expectation of a treaty not arrived; but that it might be advisable, immediately after the adjournment, to notify another meeting, as little distant as might be compatible with reasonable time of notice.

On reflection, this opinion appears to me not to be well founded, as to the last point. I fear the first part will be found true, and that the body would not upon casualty remain many days together after the expiration of the session.

In place of the course which I at first mentioned, I submit the following.

"That the Secretary of State write a letter to each member present and absent, announcing the expectation of the treaty, and that, when arrived, the Senate will be convened by a proclamation for a time not exceeding six weeks."

The letter of the Secretary of State to be sent by land, and by water also, to the most remote members, and when the proclamation for convening the Senate issues the same be done; upon special expresses for the land conveyance, and having ready some swift-sailing vessel for the water conveyance.

With these precautions, I think six weeks' notice will be enough.

The President cannot specially convene the Senate without announcing that an *extraordinary occasion* exists. He had when I left Philadelphia no such *advice* of the treaty as would warrant the assertion, and even if he had, until it arrives, there is a possibility of a miscarriage, which might prevent his having it ready to lay before the Senate at the time of meeting, if they should be convened upon contingency. These reflections have led to the change of opinion.

In great haste I have the honor to be, sir, your affectionate and obedient servant.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

New-York, March 4th, 1796.

Sir:

In pursuance of a concurrent resolution of the two houses of the legislature of the third and fourth instant, I desire you, as a Counsellor at Law, to defend in behalf of this State, a certain suit brought against Lewis Cornwall by or in behalf of Alexander Colden for the recovery of a farm sold to the said Lewis by the commissioners of forfeitures for the Southern District.

You will herewith receive a copy of the said resolution, and of the petition of Lewis Cornwall which gave occasion to it.

I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, March 4th, 1796.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

I have just now written to the President, to communicate some intelligence lately received from Paris. This I have done in the abstract, but my correspondent has written to me as follows. (Here was inserted the letter from ———.) This letter is dated Paris, the fifteenth of last month.

You may be sure, by my communicating this to you, that I have confidence in the sources from whence it is derived. Now, my dear friend, I have barely stated to the President the intention as to the new minister. His late declaration, as to the existing French government, has prevented me from saying a word to him on a subject, where he has, I think, committed himself.

To you I will declare my conviction, that this government cannot stand, whether the monarchy be restored or not. The people in general are averse to it. The adherents to the royal cause grow daily more numerous. If I knew decidedly the steps to be taken in aid of them, I could tell you almost with certainty whether they would be successful, for the state of that country now presents sufficient data on which to reason soundly.

I need not say to you, that if the French rulers persist in the measures which are above mentioned, America will probably be obliged to take part in the war. On a former occasion, when they talked somewhat highly, I told them that they could certainly force us into the contest; but as certainly it would be against them, let the predilections in their favor be ever so great, because it would be madness in us to risk our commerce against the navy of the world. That to join them could do them no good, and must do us much evil. At *that* time they believed me. What representations Mr. Monroe may make, I cannot pretend to divine, and much less the effect of them. Supposing, however, that you should be driven to make this election, *you* will naturally weigh not only the naval force, but also the financial resources of the opposed powers. The noisy folks with you will

undoubtedly be loud on our obligations to France, and on the long list of our grievances from England.

As to the former, I think we should always seek to perform acts of kindness towards those, who, at the bidding of their Prince, stepped forward to fight our battles. Nor would I ever permit a frigid reasoning on political motives to damp those effusions of sentiment, which are as laudable in a nation, as they are decorous to a private citizen. But would it be kind to support that power, which now tyrannizes over France, and reduce her inhabitants to unheard-of misery? Would it be grateful to mix with, much less to league with, those whose hands are yet red with the blood of him who was our real protector? Would it be decent?

As to the conduct of Britain towards us, although I see as clearly as others the ground, which we have for complaint, and can readily account for the resentments which have been excited, yet I give due weight to the causes by which that conduct was instigated; and if in some cases I find it unjustifiable, I cannot consider it as in all cases inexcusable. Provided, therefore, that our honor be saved, I am so far from thinking, that the injuries we have endured should become the source of inextinguishable hatred and perpetual war, that I would rather seek in future amity and good offices the fair motive for consigning them to utter oblivion. I have not, my dear Hamilton, any such view of our present political machinery, as to judge what may be the effect of lofty menace. I apprehend that some feeble counsels will be given. Whether they will be received and pursued, you best know, and will doubtless act accordingly. What I have to ask is, that you would put yourself in the way of being consulted. I mean locally, for should you be at a distance, the time may be too short for communication.

It is possible, after all, that the demand may turn on a single point, viz., that we shall no longer pretend to claim an exemption from seizure for those goods of an enemy, which may be found in our ships. If so, the case is plain and easy. We slide back to the law of nations, which it is our interest to preserve unimpeached. Probably we shall be called on for our guaran

tee of St. Domingo, and here many questions will arise, in the course of which we shall see, perhaps, some wise and virtuous slave-masters contending for the propriety of general emancipation, with all its consequent train of crimes. It appears certain to me, that the French Directory would not risk high language to us, if they had not received previous assurances that the people would force our government to sacrifice the national interest. These assurances were, I presume, given, and the present plan proposed, while victory seemed yet bound to the French standards, and while you received official assurances of the prosperous state of their internal affairs. The scene is now not only changed, but almost reversed, and I presume that the language, if not the conduct of certain persons, will experience a similar change.

Adieu. I am forced to conclude thus abruptly. You know I am always and truly yours,

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, March 7, 1796.

SIR:

I found young La Fayette here, and delivered him your letter, which much relieved him. I fancy you will see him on the first day of April.

Mr. Livingston's motion in the House of Representatives, concerning the production of papers, has attracted much attention. The opinion here of those who think, is, that if the motion succeeds, it ought not to be complied with. Besides, that in a matter of such a nature the production of the papers cannot fail to start new and unpleasant game. It will be fatal to the negotiating power of the government if it is to be a matter of course, for a call of either House of Congress to bring forth all the communications, however confidential.

It seems to me that something like the following answer by the President, will be advisable:

"A right in the House of Representatives to demand and have as matter of course, and without specification of any object, all communications respecting a negotiation with a foreign power, cannot be admitted without danger of much inconvenience. A discretion in the Executive department, how far and when to comply in such cases, is essential to the due conduct of foreign negotiations, and is essential to preserve the limits between the legislative and Executive departments. The present call is altogether indefinite and without any declared purpose. The Executive has no basis on which to judge of the propriety of a compliance with it; and cannot, therefore, without forming a very dangerous precedent, comply.

"It does not occur that the view of the papers asked for can be relative to any purpose of the competency of the House of Representatives, but that of an impeachment. In every case of a foreign treaty, the grounds for an impeachment must primarily be deduced from the nature of the instrument itself, and from nothing extrinsic. If at any time a treaty should present such grounds, and it shall have been so pronounced by the House of Representatives, and a further inquiry shall be necessary to ascertain the culpable person, there being then a declared and ascertained object, the President would attend with due respect to any application for necessary information."

This is but a hasty and crude outline of what has struck me as an eligible course. For while a too easy compliance will be mischievous, a too peremptory and unqualified refusal might be liable to just criticism.

Most respectfully and affectionately,
I have the honor to be, &c.,
Your obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO JAY.

NEW-YORK, March 10th, 1796.

SIR:

I had the honor duly to receive your Excellency's letter of the 4th instant. I did not immediately answer it, from an indistinct and confused recollection that a state of things existed, in reference to the opposite party, which did not permit my being concerned for the State. It now appears that I was not mistaken, and that I cannot, with propriety, execute your Excellency's desire.

With perfect respect,
I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your very obedient servant.

To the Governor of New-York.

HAMILTON TO WILLIAM SMITH.

March 10th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I observe Madison brings the power of the House of Representatives in the case of the treaty to this question. Is the agency of the House of Representatives on the subject *deliberative* or *executive?* On the sophism that the Legislature, and each branch of it, is *essentially deliberative*, and consequently must have discretion, will he, I presume, maintain the freedom of the House to concur or not.

But the sophism is easily refuted. The legislature, and each branch of it, is *deliberative*, but with *various* restrictions, not with *unlimited discretion.* All the injunctions and restrictions on the constitution, for instance, abridge its *deliberative* faculty, and leave it *quoad hoc*, merely executive. Thus the constitution enjoins that there shall be a fixed allowance for the Judges, which shall not be diminished. The Legislature cannot, therefore, deliberate

whether they will make a permanent provision, and when the allowance is fixed they cannot deliberate whether they will appropriate and pay the money. So far their deliberative faculty is abridged. The *mode* of raising and appropriating the money, only remains matter of deliberation.

So likewise, the constitution says that the President and Senate shall make treaties, and that these treaties shall be supreme laws. It is a contradiction to call a thing a law which is not binding. It follows that by constitutional injunction the House of Representatives quoad the stipulations of treaties, as in the case cited, respecting the Judges, are not deliberative, but merely executive, *except as to the means of executing.*

Any other doctrine would vest the Legislature, and each House, with unlimited discretion, and destroy the very idea of a constitution limiting its discretion. The constitution would at once vanish.

Besides, the *legal* power to refuse the execution of a law, is a *power to repeal it.* Thus, the House of Representatives must, as to treaties, concentre in itself the whole legislative power, and undertake without the Senate to repeal a law. For the law is complete by the action of the President and Senate.

Again. A treaty, which is a contract between nation and nation, abridges even the legislative discretion of the whole legislature by the moral obligation of keeping its faith; *a fortiori*, that of one branch. In theory, there is no method by which the obligations of a treaty can be annulled, but by mutual consent of the contracting parties—by ill faith in one of them, or by a revolution of government, which is of a nature so to change the condition of parties, as to render the treaty inapplicable.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, March 16th, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter of the ——. My opinion on the resolution when it first appeared was that the President should answer in substance as follows, viz.:

"That it could not be admitted as a right of course in the House of Representatives, to call for and have papers in the Executive department, especially those relating to foreign negotiations, which frequently embrace confidential matters. That under all the circumstances, upon so indefinite a call without any declared specific object, he did not think it proper nor consistent with what he owed to a due separation of the respective powers to comply with the call. That if, in the course of the proceedings of the House, a question of their competency should arise, for which any of the papers in question might be necessary, an application made on that ground would be considered with proper respect," &c.

But after what has taken place in the discussion, if it can with propriety be got in as to form, I think a stand ought to be made by the President against the usurpation. The following propositions comprise an obvious ground:

I. The Constitution empowers the President, with the Senate, to make treaties.

II. A treaty is a perfected compact between two nations, obligatory on both.

III. That cannot be a perfected contract or treaty, to the validity of which the concurrence of any other power in the State is constitutionally necessary. Again,

IV. The Constitution says a treaty is a *law*.

V. A law is an obligatory rule of action, prescribed by the competent authority. But,

VI. That cannot be such a rule of action, or *law*, to the validity of which the assent of any other person is requisite. Again,

VII. The object of the *legislative* power is to prescribe a rule

of action for our own nation, which includes foreigners coming among us.

VIII. The object of the treaty power is, by agreement, to settle a rule of action between two nations, binding on both.

IX. These objects are essentially different, and in a constitutional sense, cannot interfere.

X. The treaty power binding the *will* of the nation, must, within its constitutional limits, be paramount to the legislative power, which is that will; or, at least, the last *law* being a treaty, must repeal an antecedent contrary law. And,

XI. If the legislative power is competent to repeal this law by a subsequent law, this must be the whole legislative power, by a solemn act in the forms of the constitution, not one branch of the legislative power by disobeying the law.

XII. The foregoing construction reconciles the two powers, and assigns them distinguishable spheres of action; while

XIII. The other construction, that claiming that a right of assent is a sanction for the House of Representatives, destroys the treaty, making powerless and negative two propositions in the Constitution, *to wit:* 1. That the President, with the Senate, are competent to make treaties. 2. That a treaty is a law.

On these grounds, with the President's name, a bulwark not to be shaken is erected. The propositions, in my opinion, amount to irresistible demonstration.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, March 24th, 1796.

SIR:

I had the honor to receive yesterday your letter of the 22d. The course you suggest has some obvious advantages, and merits careful consideration. I am not, however, without fear that there are things in the *instructions* to Mr. Jay—which good policy, considering the matter *externally* as well as *internally*,

would render it inexpedient to communicate. This I shall ascertain to-day. A middle course is under consideration—that of not communicating the papers to the House, but of declaring that the Secretary of State is directed to permit them to be *read* by the *members individually.* But this is liable to a great part of the objections which militate against a full public disclosure. I throw it out, however, here, that you may be thinking of it, if it has not before occurred. In the course of this day, I shall endeavor to concentre my ideas, and prepare something, the premises of which may be in any event proper, admitting of the conclusion being modified and adapted to your eventual determination.

Respectfully and affectionately, Sir, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

March 26th, 1799.

SIR:

I perceive by the newspaper that the resolution has been carried. I have not been idle as far as my situation would permit, but it will not be in my power, as I had hoped, to send you what I am preparing by this day's post; the next will carry it. It does not, however, appear necessary that the executive should be in a hurry.

The final result in my mind, for reasons I shall submit in my next, is, that the papers ought all to be refused. I am persuaded the communication of the instructions in particular would do harm to the President and to the government.

Respectfully and affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

March 28th, 1796.

SIR:

I am mortified at not being able to send you by this post a certain draft. But the opinion that reasons ought to be given, and pretty fully, has extended it to considerable length, and a desire to make it accurate as to *idea* and expression, keeps it still upon the anvil. But it is so far prepared that I can assure it by to-morrow's post. Delay is always unpleasant. But the case is delicate and important enough to justify it.

I mentioned as my opinion, that the instruction to Mr. Jay, if published, would do harm. The truth, unfortunately, is, that it is in general a crude mass, which will do no credit to the administration. This was my impression of it at the time; but the delicacy of attempting too much reformation in the work of another head of department, the hurry of the moment, and a great confidence in the person to be sent, prevented my attempting that reformation.

There are several particular points in it which would have a very ill effect to be published.

I. There is a part which seems to admit the idea that an adjustment might be made respecting the spoliations which should leave that matter finally to the *ordinary course* of the British courts. This is obscurely and ambiguously expressed, but the least color for such a construction would give occasion for infinite clamor.

II. The negotiator is expressly instructed to accede to the *entire abolition of alienism* as to inheritances of land. You have seen what clamor has been made about the moderate modification of this idea in the treaty, and can thence judge what a load would fall on this part of the instructions.

III. He is instructed to enter into an article against the employment of privateers in war. This is manifestly against the policy of a country which has no *navy* in a treaty with a country which has a large navy. For it is chiefly by privateers that we

could annoy the trade of Great Britain. Some would consider this as a philosophic whim; others as an intentional sacrifice of the interests of this country to Great Britain.

IV. There are several parts which hold up the disreputable and disorganizing idea of not being able to *restrain our own citizens.*

V. There are parts which, though proper to our own agent, the publication of which would be a violation of decorum towards Great Britain, after an amicable termination of the affair, and offensive, because contrary to the rules of friendly and respectful procedure.

VI. The instructions have too little point (in the spirit of the framer, who was in the habit of saying much and saying little), and would be censured as altogether deficient in firmness and spirit.

On the whole, I have no doubt that the publication of these instructions would do harm to the executive, and to the character and interest of the government.

The draft will be so prepared as to admit of this conclusion.

If the President concludes to send papers, they ought only to be the *commissions*, and Mr. Jay's *correspondence*, saying, that these are all that it appears to him for the public interest to send.

But he may be then prepared for as much clamor as if he sent none. It would be said that what was done showed that the principle had not been the obstacle—and that the instructions were withheld because they would not bear the light. Or, at most, only that part of the instructions should go which begins at these words, "4. This enumeration presents, generally, the objects which it is desirable to comprise in a commercial treaty, &c.," to the end of the instructions.

But after the fullest reflection I have been able to give the subject (though I perceive serious degrees of inconveniencies in the course), I entertain a final opinion that it will be best, after the usurpation attempted by the House of Representatives, to send none, and to resist in totality.

Affectionately and respectfully, &c.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, 31st March, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I do not know how to thank you sufficiently, for the trouble you have taken to dilate on the request of the House of Representatives for the papers relative to the British treaty; or how to apologize for the trouble (much greater than I had any idea of giving) which you have taken to show the impropriety of that request.

From the first moment, and from the fullest conviction in my own mind, I had resolved to *resist the principle* which was evidently intended to be established by the call of the House of Representatives; and only deliberated on the manner in which this could be done, with the least bad consequences.

To effect this, three modes presented themselves to me—1st, a denial of the papers *in toto*, assigning concise, but cogent reasons for the denial; 2d, to grant them in whole; or, 3d, in part; accompanied with a pointed protest against the right of the House to control treaties, or to call for papers without specifying their object; and against the compliance being drawn into precedent.

I had as little hesitation in deciding that the first was the most tenable ground, but from the peculiar circumstances of *this case*, it merited consideration, if the principle could be saved, whether facility in the provisions might not result from a compliance. An attentive examination, however, of the papers and the subject, soon convinced me that to furnish *all* the papers would be highly improper; and that a *partial* delivery of them would leave the door open for as much calumny as the entire refusal—perhaps more so—as it might, and I have no doubt would be said, that all such as were essential to the purposes of the House were withheld.

Under these impressions I proceeded, with the Heads of Departments, and the Attorney-General, to collect materials, and to prepare an answer, subject, however, to alteration and revision

according to circumstances. This answer was ready on Monday, and proposed to be sent in on Tuesday, but it was delayed until I should receive what was expected; not doing it definitely on that day, the delivery of my answer was further postponed till the next, notwithstanding the anxious solicitude which was visible in all quarters to learn the result of Executive decision.

Finding that the draft I had prepared embraced most if not all the principles which were detailed in the paper I received yesterday, though not the reasonings—that it would take considerable time to copy the latter—and above all, having understood, that if the papers were refused, a fresh demand, with strictures, might be expected, I sent in the answer which was ready, reserving the other as a source for reasoning, if my information proves true.

I could not be satisfied without giving you this concise account of the business—to express again my sincere thanks for the pains you have been at to investigate the subject.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, April 2d, 1796.

SIR:

The express is this morning gone off with your letter to young La Fayette. I foresaw when in Philadelphia a certain machination on the subject.

I rejoice at the decision you have come to in regard to the papers. Whatever may happen, it is right in itself, will elevate the character of the President, and inspire confidence abroad. The contrary would have encouraged a spirit of usurpation, the bounds of which could not be foreseen.

If there is time, I should like to have back the paper lately sent to correct, prune, guard, and strengthen—I have no copy. But of the expediency of this the circumstances on the spot will decide. There is great fitness in the message to the House. I

see only one point the least vulnerable, the too direct notice of the debate in the House—which may be attacked as contrary to parliamentary usage. I hear the criticism here among the L——s. But this cannot be very material.

Most respectfully and affectionately,

I have the honor to be, &c.

HAMILTON TO KING.

April 2d, 1796.

Thank you for yours of yesterday. I have no copy of the paper sent: the greatest part went in the original draft, though considerably reformed according to joint ideas, and somewhat strengthened by new thoughts. A letter I have received tells me that it came to hand after the ground which was acted upon had been formally considered and taken in council, and that it is referred for future use in the event of an expected criticism of the message.

I have asked for it *conditionally*, to prune, correct, &c. If I get it you shall have a copy. But you must take care that there is no crossing of path.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

April 8th, 1796.

SIR:

I have done something, but not what I intended. The sitting of two courts, and my professional engagements there, prevent the execution of my plan. I no longer withhold the paper, lest circumstances should render it of any use.

Yours affectionately and respectfully,

A. H.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

New-York, April 9th, 1796.

Sir:

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity of announcing to you one whom I know to be interesting to you as a bearer of this—Mr. Motier La Fayette. I allow myself to share, by anticipation, the satisfaction which the meeting will afford to all the parties—the more, as I am persuaded that time will confirm the favorable representation I have made of the person, and justify the interest you take in him.

I have pleasure, also, in presenting to you Mr. Frestel, who accompanies him, and who more and more convinces me, that he is entirely worthy of the charge reposed in him, and every way entitled to esteem.

With the most respectful and affectionate attachment, I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

A. Hamilton.

KING TO HAMILTON.

Wednesday, April 20th, 1796.

The petitions of the merchants and others will be presented to-day, and, it is said, they have been signed by almost every merchant and trader in the city.—Pettit, Barclay, and some few others are exceptions.—A counter petition has been very industriously carried through the city and its suburbs, and though very few merchants, traders, or principal mechanics have signed it, it will show a long catalogue of names. The persons engaged in this service have been very successful in the Northern and Southern liberties, and taking their stands upon the wharves

they have collected the names of sailors, and others, as well foreigners as citizens. Baltimore has become very zealous, and I fear from their displeasure at the conduct of Col. Smith, they have hazarded his vote and influence whatever it may be in the question of provision for the treaty. They have drawn up a paper, which is signed by almost the whole body of merchants, in which they request and instruct him to promote by the proper provisions the execution of the treaty. His inclination was in favor of a provision, but I am apprehensive his pride will be so wounded by *this instruction* that he may vote against his judgment to prove his independence. We shall probably receive from the House to-day a bill, making an appropriation for defraying the expenses of carrying into effect the Spanish treaty.

We shall amend it by adding a provision for the British treaty,—if the House disagree, we shall adhere, and they will lose the bill by refusing our amendment,—we shall then add to the Algerine bill an amendment providing for the British and Spanish treaties. The House will also decide the fate of this bill. We shall then add to the bill providing for the Indian treaty an amendment providing for the British, the Spanish, and the Algerine treaties. The House will also decide the fate of this bill. We shall then offer them a bill providing for all the treaties. This likewise they may reject, but my belief is, that the opposition will give way before we have gone through this course.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, April 15th, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

A letter by yesterday's post, from our friend Ames, informed me that the majority (57 concurring) had resolved in a private meeting to refuse appropriation for the treaty. A most important crisis ensues. Great evils may result, unless good men play

their card well and with promptitude and decision. For we must seize and carry along with us the public opinion, and loss of time may be loss of every thing.

To me our true plan appears to be the following (I presuppose that a certain communication has been made):

1st. The President ought, immediately after the House has taken the ground of refusal, to send them a solemn protest. This protest ought to contain reasons in detail against the claim of the House in point of constitutional right, and ought to suggest summarily, but with solemnity and energy, the danger to the interest and peace of the country from the measures of the House, the certainty of a deep wound to our character with foreign nations, and essential destruction of their confidence in the government, concluding with an intimation that in such a state of things he must experience extreme embarrassment in proceeding in any pending or future negotiations which the affairs of the United States may require, inasmuch as he cannot look for due confidence from others, nor give them the requisite expectation that stipulations will be fulfilled on our part.

A copy of this protest to be sent to the Senate for their information. The Senate by resolutions to express strongly their approbation of his principles, to assure him of their firm support, and to advise him to proceed in the execution of the treaty on his part in the confidence that he will derive from the virtue and good sense of the people, constitutionally exerted, eventual and effectual support, and may still be the instrument of preserving the Constitution, the peace, and the honor of the nation.

Then the merchants to meet in the cities, and second by their resolutions the measures of the President and Senate, further addressing their fellow citizens to co-operate with them. Petitions afterwards to be handed throughout the United States.

The Senate to hold fast, and consent to no adjournment till the expiration of the term of service of the present House, unless provision made.

The President to cause a confidential communication to be made to the British minister stating candidly what has happened, his regrets, his adherence nevertheless to the treaty, his resolu-

tion to persist in the execution, as far as depends on the Executive, and his hope that the faith of the country will be eventually preserved.

I prefer that measures should begin with a protest of the President, as it will be in itself proper, and there will be more chance of success if the contest appears to be with him and the Senate auxiliaries, than in the reverse.

But in all this business, celerity, decision, and an imposing attitude, is indispensable. The glory of the President, the safety of the Constitution, the greatest interests, depend upon it. Nothing will be wanting here. I do not write to the President on the subject.

An idea has come from *Cooper*, of an intention in our friends in the House of Representatives to resist the execution of the other treaties, the Spanish and Algerine, unless coupled with the British. But this will be altogether wrong and impolitic. The misconduct of the other party cannot justify in us an imitation of their principles. 'Tis best, I think, that the first course should be given to the other treaties. Or at most, if a *feint* of opposition is deemed advisable, it ought to be left to the Senate by postponement, &c. But even this is very delicate and very questionable.

Let us be *right*, because to do right is intrinsically proper, and I verily believe it is the best means of securing final success. Let our adversaries have the whole glory of sacrificing the interests of the nation.

Yours, affectionately.

P. S.—If the treaty is not executed, the President will be called upon, by regard to his character and the public good, to *keep his post* till another House of Representatives has pronounced.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, April 18, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter received to-day. Our merchants here are not less alarmed than those of Philadelphia, and will do all they can. All the insurance people meet to-day. The merchants and traders will meet to-morrow, or the next day. A petition will be prepared, and circulated among the other citizens.

I regret that a certain communication was not made. Indeed, I think that the Executive will be hereafter blamed for keeping back the fact in so critical a posture of things.

Yours truly, &c.

HAMILTON TO KING.

April 20, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Yesterday's post brought me a letter from you, which gave me pleasure. The papers will apprise you of the proceedings of the merchants and traders here on yesterday. There is among them, also, "*un*exampled unanimity," and, as far as I can judge, the current is in our favor throughout the city. Persons to-day are going through the different wards.

Yours sincerely, &c.

P. S. Our friends in the House will do well to gain time.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, April 20th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 18th instant. The money paid me for you shall be placed to your credit in the office of discount and deposit, as you desire.

The British ministry are as great fools, or as great rascals, as our Jacobins, else our commerce would not continue to be distressed as it is by their cruisers; nor would the Executive be embarrassed, as it now is, by the new proposition.

Not knowing the precise form of that proposition, I cannot have an opinion what is right on the part of the Executive. But if I understand it, it ought to be sufficient for the Executive to declare that the article in the treaty with the Indians can never operate, nor will be permitted to operate, in contravention of the treaty with Great Britain. It relates to a right reserved for our benefit, which we can, and will, waive; and, being in a treaty of subsequent date, it naturally gives way to another of prior date, with which it is consistent. The Executive ought to be careful about admitting the propriety of a new condition, though it ought to be ready to give all due satisfaction. It should not even shun a new explanatory article, if reasonable in itself, but should agree to it upon the strength of its own reasonableness, not as a new condition foreign to the treaty. This affair requires great attention; but, as I said, I do not know enough to give advice worth much.

Yet the government must take care not to appear pusillanimous. I hope a *very serious* remonstrance has long since gone against the wanton impressment of our seamen. It will be an error to be too tame with this overbearing cabinet.

Our city is in motion against the plan of the majority in the House of Representatives, with regard to the treaty. The current appears to be strong with us. The papers will tell you the measures in contemplation.

But I was sorry to learn that a *proper qualified* communica-

tion was not made to the House of Representatives, of the late communication from the British agent. The Executive may hereafter be blamed for withholding so important a fact; yet, not knowing the whole affair, I cannot judge well on this point, more than on the other.

HAMILTON TO KING.

April 23d, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your two letters, and shall this day attend to the one which requires it. I see, however, no objection to it as it stands, and I do not now perceive how the further object you aim at could be accomplished in the manner you seem to desire.

I have written to *Ames* this day concerning the course of things in our city. He will communicate to you, as I have not time to repeat. We are decidedly well. But it is intended to-day to continue the petition in circulation, and to-morrow it will be sent. I have thought it advisable to publish an extract from your letter without naming you.

Yours truly, &c.

MARSHALL TO HAMILTON.

RICHMOND, April 25th, 1796.

Yours of the 14th only reached me by the mail of this evening. I had been informed of the temper of the House of Representatives, and we had promptly taken such measures as appeared to us fitted to the occasion. We could not venture an expression of the public mind under the violent prejudices with which

it has been impressed, so long as a hope remained, that the House of Representatives might ultimately consult the interest or honor of the nation. But now, when all hope of this has vanished, it was deemed advisable to make the experiment, however hazardous it might be. A meeting was called, which was more numerous than I have ever seen at this place; and after a very ardent and zealous discussion which consumed the day, a decided majority declared in favor of a resolution that the welfare and honor of the nation required us to give full effect to the treaty negotiated with Britain. This resolution, with a petition drawn by an original opponent of the treaty, will be forwarded by the next post to Congress. The subject will probably be taken up in every county in the State, or at any rate in very many of them. It is probable that a majority of the counties will avow sentiments opposed to ours, but the division of the State will appear to be much more considerable than has been stated. In some of the districts there will certainly be a majority who will concur with us, and that perhaps may have some effect. As man is a gregarious animal, we shall certainly derive much aid from declarations in support of the constitution and of appropriations, if such can be obtained from our sister States. The ground we take here is very much that of Mr. Hillhouse. We admit the discretionary constitutional power of the representatives on the subject of appropriations, but contend that the treaty is as completely a valid and obligatory contract when negotiated by the President and ratified by him, with the assent and advice of the Senate, as if sanctioned by the House of Representatives also under a constitution requiring such sanction. I think it would be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to engage Mr. H. on the right side of this question. If you have any communications which might promote a concurrence of action, we shall be proud to receive them.

With much respect and esteem,
From, dear Sir, your obedient servant,
JOHN MARSHALL.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, April 29, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your favor of the 20th. The affair with Bond stands thus, and is truly attended with some perplexing circumstances.

The communication states, that provisional orders have been given for the surrender of the posts whenever the House of Representatives shall have indicated an intention to give effect to the treaty, and when an article shall have been negotiated, explanatory of the sense of the two nations; that the 8th article of our treaty with the Indians shall not abrogate from the rights stipulated in favor of British subjects by the 3d article of the treaty with Great Britain.

The style of the memorial is respectful, and the doubtful article in the Indian treaty is attributed to want of information on our part of the stipulation in the British treaty.

I have thought that a declaration by the Executive, that we admit the doctrine of the Law of Nations, ought to be sufficient, and that insisting upon an explanatory article was pressing a point rather unreasonably against us. As however Mr. Bond says he is instructed to insist on an article, and as the terms can be adjusted so as completely to save the national honor, perhaps we are bound to consent. I feel, however, that the Executive ought not to have been embarrassed at present.

There being two points to be settled before we obtain the posts, one concerning the legislature, and the other the Senate, it has appeared to me, that a partial communication would be improper, and that a general one would be inexpedient. A message to the House would moreover unnecessarily stimulate the passions of the opposition. A resolution for giving effect to the treaty is under consideration; the presumption ought to be that they will do their duty. On this ground the Senate have forborne to connect a provision for the British treaty, with the bills

which have been sent up respecting the other treaties. The principles which have governed the Senate, if correct, require the Executive to forbear his interference.

Some difficulty may be apprehended in obtaining a ratification of the explanatory article in the present state of the Senate, but it will be surmounted.

I think the government will succeed in the present contest, but it remains doubtful whether order can be long preserved. Unless a radical change of opinion can be effected in the Southern States, the existing establishments will not last eighteen months. The influence of Messrs. Gallatin, Madison and Jefferson must be diminished, or the public affairs will be brought to a stand. No proper attention is paid to the current business of the government by the House. Every thing is in the hands of the Committees; nothing is understood, and few matters of importance in a train for being completed. Before the treaty question commenced, the treaty furnished a pretence for delay; the length of the session, and the languor of the members, will furnish another pretext, after that question shall have been determined.

Mr. Patten, the postmaster, communicated to me yesterday a singular circumstance. Some time since letters were delivered into his office, for Robert Cowper, and a Doctor Graham, of Suffolk, in Virginia. By some means, Mr. Patten discovered that these letters had been brought from Virginia, and this he says induced him to suspect some mischief, and to write to Virginia. I have seen the answer which he (P.) received from Robert Cowper, in which he says that the letter to him was signed with your name—that to Doctor Graham was signed with the name of Mr. Van Allen, of Congress.

It seems that the letters were forgeries, and contain something which, if true, might injure yours and Mr. Van Allen's characters. This is doubtless some Jacobin trick.

I shall try to detect it, and give you information; at present I have no particulars.

KING TO HAMILTON.

Sunday, 1st May, 1796.

In committee of the whole on Friday, it was resolved by the casting vote of Muhlenburgh, the chairman, to make provision by law for carrying the treaty with England into effect; yesterday the resolution of the committee of the whole was passed in the House by 51 against 48. A proposition to prefix to the resolution a preamble declaring the treaty to be injurious to the interests of the United States, and assigning the short duration of its temporary articles as a reason why it should be permitted to go into effect, was negatived by 50 against 49, and the resolution was immediately, and without division, referred to a committee, with instructions to prepare and report a bill or bills in conformity with the resolution. The failure of the party in their intention to denounce the treaty, I am fearful, will not discourage them in a second attempt. A majority of five or six (if I am not mistaken) would join in a vote of condemnation, but in the shape in which the proposition was offered, some of the most inveterate opponents of the treaty voted in the negative, because, they said, if they voted for the preamble, it would be then proper for them to vote for the resolution, which they were determined not to do. Though from the stage in which the business now is, I hope the attempt will not be made; yet, if an independent resolution should be offered, declaring the treaty to be injurious, &c., I am apprehensive it would be adopted. This, however, would not defeat the provision for the execution of the treaty—51 votes in the affirmative; the Speaker's vote with that of Mr. Freeman, of Massachusetts, both of whom are in favor of the provisions, make 53 affirmative voices, a majority of the whole number of representatives.

Yours, &c.

KING TO HAMILTON.

MONDAY, 2d May, 1796.

The inclosed letter will give you all the information that we have on the subject to which it relates. It seems problematical whether P. H. can be induced to agree in the arrangement. Some circumstances of which I have lately heard incline me to believe that he will not. Our session will close by the first of June, provided no further impediment is thrown in the way of the provision for giving efficacy to the treaty with England—and it is much to be wished that a definitive arrangement should be made before we separate.

Mr. Pinckney has asked leave to return home, and waits only for permission. To his former stock of popularity he will now add the good-will of those who have been peculiarly gratified with the Spanish treaty. Should we concur in him, will he not receive as great, perhaps greater, southern and western support than any other man?

You must know that I am not a little tired with this separation from my family and drudging in the Senate. The work now before us being finished, I think I am entitled to a dismission. It would be agreeable to me to spend a few years abroad, and if I do not misconceive the interests of the country, I think I could render some service to the public at the present period in England. Will you converse with Mr. Jay on this subject—I can through no other channel communicate with the Executive—nor do I desire that either of you should suggest the measure, unless you both agree in its propriety and utility. Farewell.

Yours very sincerely.

HAMILTON TO KING.

May 4, 1796.

My Dear Sir:

Since my last I have received two or three letters from you. The late turn of the treaty question makes us all very happy. I hope no future embarrassment will arise.

I am entirely of opinion that, Patrick Henry declining, Mr. Pinckney ought to be our man. It is even an idea of which I am fond in various lights. Indeed, on latter reflection, I rather wish to be rid of Patrick Henry, that we may be at full liberty to take up Pinckney.

In the event of Pinckney's return to this country, I am of opinion, all circumstances considered, it is expedient you should replace him. I hope no great question will in a short period agitate our councils, and I am sure you will do much good on the scene in question. I have called on Jay, but happened not to find him disengaged. I shall quickly see him, and shall, with great pleasure, do every thing requisite on my part.

We believe confidently our election in the city has succeeded; the other party, however, also claims success. Our Senator ticket seems admitted on both sides to have prevailed, and all accounts assure us of great success throughout the State. The *vile affair* of whipping Burke and M^c^Credy made our election, in the view of the common people, a question between the rich and the poor. You will easily conceive how much this must have embarrassed and jeoparded.

Yours affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO KING.

May 5th, 1796.

Dear Sir:

After reading, seal and hand in the inclosed. If such things are to be, you cannot leave the Senate. Jay is against it, at all

events till the European storm is over. We must all think well of this business. Adieu.

Yours affectionately, &c.

The inclosed letter was for the President.

R. K.

STEVENS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 7, 1796.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Almost ever since your departure I have been confined to my chamber, by a severe and obstinate catarrh. Though much better, at present my health is still so much deranged that I dread encountering the warmth of the summer months in this city. I have, therefore, determined to take a voyage to sea, and I shall visit St. Croix before my return. Mrs. Stevens has concluded to accompany me with our little ones. Our absence will be but short. If no unexpected event takes place, we shall certainly return by the month of September. I could not, however, leave America without assuring you of our best wishes for the health and prosperity of yourself and family. May every blessing attend you. Mrs. S. unites with me in affectionate remembrance of Mrs. Hamilton.

I remain, with unfeigned attachment,

My dear Sir,

Your sincere friend,

EDWARD STEVENS.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

PHILADELPHIA, 8th May, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your note of the 5th instant, accompanying the information given to you by G—— M——, on the 4th of March, came safe on Friday. The letter he refers to as having been written to me is not yet received; but others from Mr. Monroe, of similar complexion, and almost of as imperious a tone from that government, have got to hand.

That justice and policy should dictate the measures with which we are threatened, is not to be conceived; and one would think that even folly and madness, on their part, would hardly go such lengths, without supposing a stimulus of a more serious nature than the town meetings and the particular resolutions which appeared in the course of last summer and autumn, on ours. Yet, as it seems to be the era of strange vicissitudes and unaccountable transactions—attended with a sort of irrresistible fatality in many of them, I shall not be surprised at any event that may happen, however extraordinary it may be, and therefore, it may not be amiss to ruminate upon the information which has been received in its fullest latitude, and be prepared to answer the demands on the extensive scale which has been mentioned.

What then do you think ought to be said in case G—— M——'s information should prove true *in all its parts?* and what if the proceedings and instructions of the French Directory should not agree with my conjecture, which is, that encouraged by the proceedings of last summer on the treaty (as already mentioned), and aided, perhaps, by communications of influential men in this country, through a medium which ought to have been the last to engage in it, that that government *may*, and I believe *will*, send out an envoy extraordinary, with instructions, to make strong remonstrances against the unfriendliness (as they will term it) and the tendency of our treaty with Great Britain; accompanied, probably, and expectedly, with discretionary powers to

go farther, according to circumstances, and the existing state of matters when he shall have arrived here.

Perhaps these instructions may extend to a releasement from that part of our treaty with *them*, which claims exemption from the seizure of enemies' goods in *our* vessels; perhaps to demand the fulfilment of our guarantee of their West India islands as the most likely means of affording them relief, under the circumstances they labor at present; perhaps, too, to endeavor to render null and void our treaty with Great Britain; possibly *all of them*, or the dissolution of the alliance. But I cannot bring my mind to believe that they seriously mean, or that they could accompany this envoy with a fleet, to *demand* the annihilation of the treaty with Great Britain in fifteen days, or that war, in case of refusal, must follow as a consequence.

Were it not for the unhappy differences among ourselves, *my* answer would be short and decisive, to this effect: We are an independent nation, and act for ourselves. Having fulfilled, and being willing to fulfil (as far as we are able), our engagements with other nations,—and having decided on, and strictly observed a mutual conduct towards the belligerent powers, from an unwillingness to involve ourselves in war, we will not be dictated to by the politics of any nation under heaven, farther than treaties require of us.

Whether the *present*, or any circumstances should do more than *soften* this language, may merit consideration. But if we are to be told by a foreign power (if our engagements with it are not infracted) what we *shall do*, and what we shall *not do*, we have independence yet to seek, and have contended hitherto for very little.

If you have communicated the purport of Mr. G—— M——'s letter to Mr. Jay, I wish you would lay this also before him, in *confidence*, and that you and he would be so good as to favor me with your sentiments and opinions on both; and on the measures which you think would be most advisable to be taken in case we should have to encounter the difficulties with which we are threatened, which, assuredly, will have been brought on us by the misconduct of some of our own intemperate people, who seem

to have preferred throwing themselves into the arms of France (even under the present circumstances of that country), to that manly and neutral conduct which is so essential, and would so well become us, as an independent nation.

Before I close this letter I will mention another subject, which, though in a smaller degree, is nevertheless embarrassing. This also is communicated in confidence. It respects the wishes of young La Fayette, relative to his father. As is very natural, and what might have been expected, he is extremely solicitous that something should be attempted to obtain the liberation of him, and has brought forward several plans (suggested by Doctor Bollman, who, it is to be feared, will be found a troublesome guest among us) to effect it.

These will be better understood by the inclosures now sent, than by any details I could give, when I add to them the supposition of Fayette and Frestel, that the Doctor is without funds, and will be more embarrassing *to them*, the longer he remains here—no mention, however, that has come to my knowledge, of his going away.

The result of my reflection on this subject, and which I have communicated to the two young men, is, that although I am convinced in my own mind that Mr. La Fayette will be held in confinement by the combined powers until peace is established; yet, to satisfy them and their friends of my disposition to facilitate their wishes, as far as it can be done with any propriety on my part, I would, as a *private person*, express in a letter to the emperor my wish, and what I believe to be the wishes of this country towards that gentleman, viz.: that the liberation of him, conditioned on his repairing hither, would be a grateful measure; that this letter I would put under cover to Mr. Pinckney, to be forwarded or not, according to the view he might have of its success, after conversing indirectly with the diplomatic characters of the combined powers in London; but that I could not, while in public office, have any agency in, or even knowledge of any project that should require concealment, or that I should be unwilling to appear openly and avowedly in; that as Doctor Bollman had committed an act (however meritorious and pleasing it

might be to the friends of Mr. de La Fayette,) which was received in a very obnoxious light by the power in whose possession the prisoner was—had narrowly escaped condign punishment for it himself—and was released upon the express condition that he should never again appear in those dominions—that I could neither show him countenance, nor could I furnish him with money to extricate himself from difficulties, (if he was in any,)—seeing but little difference between giving before or after to a man who stands in the light in which he does between that power and the Executive of the United States; but that, if he was disposed to quit the latter, I had no doubt, and he might be so assured, that the friends of Mr. de La Fayette would raise a sufficient sum to enable him to do this, and to defray his expenses since he has been in this country. What they will say to him, or he do in this matter, I know not. If you and Mr. Jay see no impropriety in such a letter as I have mentioned, to be used at the discretion of Mr. Pinckney, I would thank either of you for drafting it—Mr. Jay in particular having been in the habit, and better acquainted with the style and manner of addressing these sort of characters than I am, would be able to give it a better shape. To return the papers now sent with the draught required as soon as convenient, would be acceptable to, dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, May 10th, 1796.

SIR:

When last in Philadelphia, you mentioned to me your wish, that I should *re-dress* a certain paper which you had prepared. As it is important that a thing of this kind should be done with great care, and much at leisure, touched and re-touched, I submit

a wish that, as soon as you have given it the *body* you mean it to have, it may be sent to me.*

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 15th, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

On this day week, I wrote you a letter on the subject of the information received from G—— M——, and put it with some other papers respecting the case of Mr. de La Fayette under cover to Mr. Jay; to whom also I had occasion to write. But in my hurry (making up the dispatches for the post-office next morning) I forgot to give it a superscription; of course it had to return from New-York for one, and to encounter all the delay occasioned thereby before it could reach your hands.

Since then I have been favored with your letter of the 10th instant; and inclose (in its rough state) the paper mentioned therein, with some alteration in the first page (since you saw it) relative to the reference at foot. Having no copy by me except of the quoted part, nor the notes from which it was drawn, I beg leave to recommend the draft now sent, to your particular attention.†

Even if you should think it best to throw the *whole* into a different form, let me request, notwithstanding, that my draft may be returned to me (along with yours), with such amendments and corrections, as to render it as perfect as the formation is susceptible of; curtailed if too verbose; and relieved of all tautology, not necessary to enforce the ideas in the original or quoted part. My wish is that the whole may appear in a plain style; and be handed to the public in an honest, unaffected, simple garb.

* Copied from Writings of Washington. Whether it is an extract from, or the entire letter, is unknown to the editor.

† The above draft of the Farewell Address is among the papers of Washington.

It will be perceived from hence, that I am attached to the quotation. My reasons for it are, that as it is not only a fact that such an address was written and on the point of being published, but *known also to one or two* of those characters who are now strongest and foremost in the opposition to the government; and consequently to the person administering of it contrary to their views; the promulgation thereof as an evidence that it was much against my inclination that I continued in office, will cause it more readily to be believed, that I could have *no* view in extending the powers of the Executive beyond the limits prescribed by the Constitution; and will serve to lessen, in the public estimation, the pretensions of that party to the patriotic zeal and watchfulness, on which they endeavor to build their own consequence at the expense of others, who have differed from them in sentiment. And besides, it may contribute to blunt, if it does not turn aside, some of the shafts which it may be presumed will be aimed at my annunciation of this event; among which conviction of fallen popularity, and despair of being re-elected, will be levelled at me with dexterity and keenness.

Having struck out the reference to a *particular character* in the first page of the address, I have less (if any) objection to expunging those words which are contained within parentheses in pages 5, 7, and 8, in the quoted part, and those in the 18th page of what follows. Nor to the discarding the egotisms (however just they may be), if you think them liable to fair criticism, and that they had better be omitted; notwithstanding some of them relate facts which are but little known to the community.

My object has been, and must continue to be, to avoid personalities; allusions to particular measures, which may appear pointed; and to expressions which could not fail to draw upon me attacks which I should wish to avoid, and might not find agreeable to repel.

As there will be another session of Congress before the political existence of the present House of Representatives, or my own, will constitutionally expire, it was not my design to say a word to the Legislature on this subject; but to withhold the promulgation of my intention until the period when it shall be-

come indispensably necessary for the information of the electors, previous to the election (which, this year, will be delayed until the 7th of December). This makes it a little difficult and uncertain what to say, so long beforehand, on the part marked with a pencil in the last paragraph of the second page.

All these ideas and observations are confined, as you will readily perceive, to *my draft* of the valedictory address. If you form one anew, it will, of course, assume such a shape as you may be disposed to give it, predicated upon the sentiments contained in the inclosed paper.

With respect to the gentleman you have mentioned as successor to Mr. P——, there can be no doubt of his abilities, nor *in my mind* is there any of his fitness. But you know, as well as I, what has been said of his political sentiments with respect to another form of government; and from thence can be at no loss to guess at the interpretation which would be given to the nomination of him. However, the subject shall have due consideration; but a previous resignation would, in my opinion, carry with it too much the appearance of concert; and would have a bad, rather than a good effect.

Always, and sincerely,

I am yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, May 20, 1796.

SIR:

A belief that the occasion to which they may be applicable, is not likely to occur, whatever may have been once intended, or *pretended in terrorem*, has delayed the following observations in compliance with your desire, and which are now the result of conferences with the gentlemen you named.

The *precise form* of any *proposition* or *demand* which may be made to, or of the government, must so materially influence the

course proper to be pursued with regard to such proposition or demand, that it is very difficult to judge by anticipation what would be fit and right. The suggestions which can be submitted, must, therefore, be very general and liable to much modification, according to circumstances.

It would seem in almost any case advisable to put forward a calm exhibition of the views by which our government have been influenced in relation to the present war of Europe,—making prominent the great interest we have in peace, in our present infant state—the limitedness of our capacity for external effort—the much greater injury we should have suffered, than good we could have done to France, by taking an active part with her—the probability that she would have derived more advantage from our neutrality than from our direct aid—the promptitude with which, while all the world was combined against her, we recognized the new order of things and the continuance of our treaties, and before any other power had done so—the danger to which we exposed ourselves in so doing—the fidelity with which we have adhered to our treaties, notwithstanding formal violations of certain parts of them on the other side—our readiness to the utmost extent of our abilities to discharge our debt without *hesitation in the earliest period of the revolution*, and latterly having facilitated an anticipated enjoyment of the balance—the zeal and confidence of our merchants, by which they are now creditors for very large sums to France—the patience with which we have seen infractions of our rights—the peculiar nature of the war as it regarded the origin of our relations to France (quere?)—the declaration of the war by France against the maritime powers—her incapacity for maritime effort, and to supply our deficiency in that particular, so as to render a war not absolutely ruinous to us—the early expectations given to us by her agents, that we were not expected to become parties—the exposed state of our commerce at this time with an immense property of our merchants afloat, relying on the neutral plan which they have understood our government to be pursuing, even with the concurrence of France, at least without its opposition—the extreme mischiefs to us of a sudden

departure from the plan, and the little advantage to France from our aid—the merely *peace views* which influenced our treaty with Great Britain—the nature of that treaty involved no ingredient of political connection reserving the obligation of our prior treaties—the commercial articles terminating in two years after the present war—nothing in it to change the nature of our relations with France. All this will, of course, require great caution and delicacy, so as not to compromise the dignity of the country, or give umbrage elsewhere; and I think the observations ought to hold out the idea that, under all the circumstances of the case, the government of the country thought itself at full liberty, consistently with its treaties with France, to pursue a neutral plan. And they ought to hold up strongly our desire to maintain friendship with France—our regret that any circumstance of dissatisfaction should occur—our hope that justice and reason will prevail, and preserve the good understanding, &c. The conclusion of this preliminary exposition will be according to the nature of the proposition.

If it should claim a renunciation of the British treaty, the answer will naturally be, that this sacrifice of the positive and recent engagements of the country is pregnant with consequences too humiliating and injurious to allow us to believe that the expectation can be persisted in by France, since it is to require a thing impossible, and to establish, as a price of the continuance of friendship with us, the sacrifice of our honor by an act of perfidy, which would destroy the value of our friendship to any nation. That, besides, the Executive, if it were capable of complying with a demand so fatal to us, is not competent to it, it being of the province of Congress, by a declaration of war, or otherwise, in the proper cases, to annul the operation of treaties.

If it should claim the abandonment of the articles of the present treaty respecting free ships, free goods, &c., the answer may be that our treaties with France are an entire work—parts of a whole—that nevertheless the Executive is disposed to enter into a new negotiation by a new treaty to modify them, so as may consist with a due regard to mutual interest and the circumstances of parties, and may even tend to strengthen the relations

of friendship and good understanding between the two countries.

If the guarantee of the West Indies should be claimed, the answer may be, "that the decision of this question belongs to Congress, who, if it be desired, will be convened to deliberate upon it." I presume and hope they will have adjourned—for to gain time is every thing.

The foregoing marks the general course of our reflections. They are sketched hastily, because they can only be general ideas, and much will depend on minute circumstances.

I observe what you say on the subject of a certain diplomatic mission. Permit me to offer with frankness the reflections which have struck my mind.

The importance of our security, and commerce, and good understanding with Great Britain, renders it very important that a man *able* and not *disagreeable* to that government, should be there. The gentleman in question, equally with any who could go, and better than any willing to go, answers this description. The idea hinted in your letter will apply to every man fit for the mission, by his conspicuousness, talents, and dispositions. 'Tis the stalking-horse of a certain party, and is made use of against every man who is not in their views and of sufficient consequence to attract their obloquy. If listened to, it will deprive the government of the services of the most able and faithful agents. Is this expedient? What will be gained by it? Is it not evident that this party will pursue its hostility at all events as far as public opinion will permit? Does policy require any thing more than that they shall have no real cause to complain? Will it do, in deference to their calumniating insinuations, to forbear employing the most competent men, or to intrust the great business of the country to unskilful, unfaithful, or doubtful hands? I really feel a conviction that it will be very dangerous to let party insinuations of this kind prove a serious obstacle to the employment of the best qualified characters. Mr. King is a remarkably well-informed man, a very judicious one, a man of address, a man of fortune and economy, whose situation affords just ground of confidence;—a man of unimpeached probity where he is best

known, a firm friend to the government, a supporter of the measures of the President—a man who cannot but feel that he has strong pretensions to confidence and trust.

I might enlarge on these topics, but I have not leisure, neither can it be necessary. I have thrown out so much in the fulness of my heart, and too much in a hurry to fashion either the idea or the expression as it ought to be. The President, however, will, I doubt not, receive what I have said—as it is meant, as dictated by equal regard to the public interest and to the honorable course of his administration.

I have the honor to be very respectfully and affectionately,

Dear Sir, your obedient servant.

WATSON TO HAMILTON.

NEW-YORK, May 27, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Wishing to have the benefit of your much esteemed counsel as a lawyer in important cases, if unfortunately I should be hereafter involved in any, I have inclosed you my note for one thousand dollars, payable in five years, with interest, at five per cent. per annum, which I beg you to accept, and am, respectfully, &c.

(Returned as being more than is proper, A. H.)

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 28, 1796.

I much fear that the new stock will not sell on the terms proposed, nor on any terms, without an enormous discount, probably not in sufficient sums at more than 17 shillings.

Treasury drafts cannot be negotiated for the sums wanted, without a still greater loss, unless they are made payable at a short date, say three or four months; this will endanger the public credit, and affect the banks, especially that of the United States. The consequence is, the frigates must stop, or the new stock must be sold on any terms. Sales of bank stock are urged; this idea has, however, been strenuously opposed by me. There is but one other resource which I can think of, and that is, to pledge sufficient sums of the new stock to be sold, after the expiration of six or eight months, if not redeemed.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

May 30th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I perceive Congress are invading the Sinking Fund system. If this goes through, and is sanctioned by the President, the fabric of public credit is prostrate, and the country and the President are disgraced. Treasury bills, and every expedient, however costly, to meet exigencies, must be preferable, in the event, to such an overthrow of system.

HAMILTON TO M°HENRY.

NEW-YORK, June 1st, 1796.

MY DEAR M°.

I am told the Executive Directory have complained of Mr. ——— our consul at ———. Perhaps the complaint may be ill-founded, but perhaps also he was indiscreet in giving color for it. Admit too that he is a good man, yet we must not quarrel with France for *pins and needles*. The public temper would

not bear any umbrage taken, where a trifling concession might have averted it. 'Tis a case for temporizing, reserving our firmness for great and necessary occasions. Let Mr. ——— be superseded with a kind letter to him. I do not write to Pickering, or the President, because I am not regularly possessed of the information, but I hope you will attend to the matter, even at the expense of being a little officious.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, June 1st, 1796.

SIR:

I am almost afraid to appear officious in what I am going to say; but the matter presses so deeply on my mind, that fearing you may not recollect the situation of the thing, and that it may happen not to be brought fully under your eye, I cannot refrain from making the suggestion to you. It regards a bill which, I am told, has lately passed the two Houses of Congress, authorizing a sale of *bank stock*, for paying off a sum due to the bank. You will perceive by the 8th and 9th sections of the act entitled "An Act making further provision for the support of the public credit," and for the redemption of the public debt, passed the 3d of March, 1795, that the dividends of the bank stock are appropriated to the sinking fund, with all the force and solemnity of which language is capable, and that to divert them in the manner proposed (and this too without any substitute in the act which so diverts) will be a formal, express, and unequivocal violation of the public faith, will subvert the system of the sinking fund, and with it all the security which is meant to be given to the people for the redemption of the public debt, and, violating the sanctity of an appropriation for the public debt, will overturn at once the foundation of the public credit. These are obvious and undeniable consequences; and though I am aware that great embarrassments may ensue to the Treasury if the bill by the objection of

the President is lost, and no substitute for it takes place towards the reimbursement of the bank—yet I am sure no consequences can ensue of equal moment from the rejection as from the principle of the bill going into execution.

All the President's administration has effected for establishing the credit of the country will be prostrate at a single blow. He will readily make all necessary comments upon this position. It grieves my heart to see so much shocking levity in our representative body.

A. HAMILTON.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

June 14th, 1796.

The plan of the French and our patriots begins to develope. The history of the capture of the Mount Vernon, and the apology, or rather hypothesis offered in Mr. Bache's paper of this morning, are important facts when taken in connection with what we before knew. If more seizures shall be made, or if M. Adet shall not give a satisfactory explanation, I do not see but that Mr. Monroe *must* be recalled, and a special confidential minister sent. I shall be glad to know your opinion of what is to be done. If a minister is sent, who should he be?

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

June 15th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you. From some recent information which I have obtained here, I have scarcely a doubt that the plan of the French is,

Firstly—To take all enemy property in our ships, contrary to the treaty between the two countries.

Secondly—To seize and carry in all our vessels laden with provisions for any English port.

Among this, all that they choose to think enemy property will be seized; and, for the residue, they will promise to pay.

This state of things is extremely serious. The government must play a skilful card, or all is lost. No doubt an explanation has been asked of Mr. Adet. There is room enough for asking it, and the result, if *explanatory*, ought in some convenient way to be made known.

Moreover, the government must immediately set, in earnest, about averting the storm. To this end a person must be sent in place of Monroe. General Pinckney, John Marshall, Mr. Dessaussure, of South Carolina, young Washington the lawyer, McHenry, Secretary at War, Judge Peters, occur as eligible, in different degrees, either of them far preferable to Monroe. It may be understood, that the appointment is permanent or temporary, at choice of the person sent. Under this idea perhaps Pinckney may be prevailed upon—perhaps Marshall—it being well urged as a matter of great importance to the country.

I mentioned to Colonel Pickering an idea which has since dwelt powerfully on my mind. Mr. King ought not to be empowered to do any thing to prolong the treaty beyond the two years after the war. This will afford the government a strong argument. I earnestly hope this idea will prevail in the instuctions.

P. S.—After turning the thing over and over in my mind, I know of nothing better that you have in your power, than to send McHenry. He is not yet obnoxious to the French, and has been understood formerly to have had some kindness towards their revolution. His present office would give a sort of importance to the mission. If he should incline to an absolute relinquishment, his mission might be temporary, and Colonel Pickering could carry on his office in his absence. He is at hand, and might depart immediately; and I believe he would explain very

well, and do no foolish thing. Though unusual, perhaps it might be expedient for the President to write, himself, a letter to the Executive Directory, explaining the policy by which he has been governed, and assuring of the friendship. But this would merit great consideration. Our measures, however, should be prompt.

Sometimes I think of sending Pinckney, who is in England: but various uncertainties, and possible delays, deter one from this plan.

Remember always, as a primary motive of action, that the favorable opinion of our country is to be secured.

A frigate or two to serve as convoys, would not be amiss. If the English had been wise, they would neither have harassed our trade themselves, nor suffered their trade with us, to be harassed. They would see this a happy moment for conciliating us by a clever little squadron in our ports, and on our coast.

A *hint* might not perhaps do harm.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

June 16th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

It appears to me material, under our present prospects, to complete three frigates without delay. They may be useful with reference to the Algerines. They may be useful to convoy our vessels out of the reach of picaroon privateers, hovering on our coast. I know you want money, but could not the merchants, by secret movements, be put in motion to make you a loan? I think something of this kind may be done here; and I should presume at Philadelphia, &c. The sole ostensible object may be the Algerines, but the second object may circulate in whispers. If you conclude on any thing, I will second you.

Perhaps no bad form of the thing may be, to place in the hands of your agents for building, Treasury bills, from one hundred to

one thousand dollars, payable in a year with interest; and to let it be known among the merchants, that they are lodged exclusively to facilitate the equipment of the ships. But a more direct operation may be attempted, and I should hope with success, for the sum you may want for the frigates.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 17th, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have your letters of the 15th and 16th instant; that for the President will go on by the next mail.

The affair of the capture assumes a more equivocal character as respects the French government than at first. In a confidential way from some of our merchants I have reason to believe, that proposals were made to Mr. Murgatroyd who built the ship, by Mr. Dunkinson, an English gentleman, not yet naturalized, to become the purchaser; that Dunkinson, on finding that he could not obtain a register in his own name, made a conditional purchase of the vessel, *deliverable in England*, after which the vessel was registered in Murgatroyd's name. That the loading, though in the names of Willings and Francis, is in fact British property, and that these circumstances were known or strongly suspected by the owner of the French privateer. If these things are true, and the sole motives of the capture, the thing, though perhaps wrong, is not alarming. I do not find that any other captures have been made.

Mr. Adet, I understand, has written to Colonel Pickering that the privateer was commissioned by the French government of St. Domingo (*but that he is ignorant what the orders of the privateer are*), *or what orders the French Directory in the West Indies are authorized to give in respect to neutral vessels.*

This answer is neither satisfactory, or the contrary. It is nothing, except that it leaves ground to suspect, that the West

India Directory possess some discretionary power, which may be used to distress us, if circumstances should make it expedient. What gives me more concern than the capture is, the complexion of Bache's paper, which is, I think, calculated to prepare the public mind to expect a new course of conduct by the French, contrary to our treaty, and distressing to our commerce.

I have been for some time inclined to think, that Mr. Monroe ought to be recalled; but as others have doubted, and as the thing was not demonstrable, I have not urged it. Every event shows, however, new reasons for believing that we must stop the channels by which foreign poison is introduced into our country, or suffer the government to be overturned. At all hazards, the attempt must be made.

I have the power of the President to borrow, and have been making attempts in the manner you have intimated, but without prospect of success. Bills can only be used in a case of the utmost emergency, as the discount would be ruinous. I will, however, carry on the public business this summer some way or other, though I know that we shall ultimately fail, unless some miraculous change in public measures shall speedily take place. I will write you if any thing occurs.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

June, 1796.

SIR:

I have received information this morning of a nature which, I think, you ought to receive without delay. A Mr. LeGuen, a Frenchman, a client of mine, and in whom I have inspired confidence, and who is apparently a discreet and decent man, called on me this morning to consult me on the expediency of his becoming naturalized, in order that certain events between France and the United States might not prejudice him in a suit which I am directed to bring for him for a value of 160,000 dollars. I asked

him what the events to which he alluded were. He made me the following reply under the strictest injunctions of confidence. "I have seen a letter from St. Thomas to Mr. Labagarde of this city, informing him that a plan was adopted to seize all American vessels carrying to any English port provisions of any kind, to conduct them into some French port; if found to be British property to condemn them, if American, to take them on the *accountability* of the government—adding, that he must not thence infer that it was the intention to make war upon the United States—but it was with a view to retaliate the conduct of Great Britain, to keep supplies from her, and to obtain them for themselves, and was also bottomed on some political motives not necessary to be explained." "That it was also in contemplation when Admiral Richery arrived, if the ships could be spared, to send five sail of the line to this country." Fearing, he said, that this might produce a rupture between the two countries, he had called to consult me on the subject, &c.

I asked his permission to make the communication to you. He gave me leave to do it, but with the absolute condition that the knowledge of names was on no account to go beyond *you* and *myself*. I must therefore request, sir, that this condition be exactly observed. He has promised me further information.

I believe the information, as well because the source of it under all the circumstances engages my confidence, as because the thing appears in itself probable. France wants supplies and she has not the means of paying, and our merchants have done crediting.

It becomes very material that the real situation should, as soon as possible, be ascertained, and that the merchants should know on what they have to depend. They expect that the government will ask an explanation of Mr. Adet, and that in some proper way the result will be made known.

It seems to become more and more urgent that the United States should have some faithful organ near the French government to explain their real views, and ascertain those of the French. It is all important that the people should be satisfied

that the government has made every exertion to avert a rupture, and as early as possible.

Most respectfully and affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

June 26th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I learn from a gentleman of character, that a prize, brought into Boston, by a French privateer, is about to be sold. This being in direct breach of our treaty with Great Britain, how does it happen? Though no particular law passed, the treaty being the law of the land, our custom-houses can, and ought to, prevent the entry and sale of prizes, upon executive instruction. If any thing is wanting to this end, for God's sake, my dear sir, let it be done, and let us not be disgraced.

Yours,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S.—Considering what is going on, and may go on, in the West Indies, it appears to me *essential*, that the President should be empowered to lay embargoes in the interval between the present and the next session of Congress.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, June 26th, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter without date came to my hands by Wednesday's post, and by the first post afterwards I communicated the purport of it (withholding the names) to the Secretary of State, with

directions to bestow the closest attention to the subject, and, if the application which had been made to the Minister of France, consequent on the capture of the ship Mount Vernon, had not produced such an answer as to supersede the necessity, then to endeavor to obtain such explanation of the views of the French government relatively to our commerce with Great Britain, as the nature of the case appeared to require.

That the fact is as has been represented to you, I have very little if any doubt. Many, very many circumstances, are continually happening in confirmation of it; among which, it is evident, Bache's paper, which *receives* and *gives* the tone, is endeavoring to prepare the public mind for this event, by representing it as the *predicted* and *natural* consequence of the ratification of the treaty with Great Britain.

Let me ask, therefore, Do you suppose that the Executive, in the recess of the Senate, has power, in such a case as the one before us, especially if the measure should not be *avowed* by authority, to send a special character to Paris as Envoy Extraordinary, to give and receive explanations? And if there be a doubt, whether it is not probable, nay, more than probable, that the French Directory would, in the present state of things, avail themselves of the unconstitutionality of the measure to decline receiving him? The policy of delay, to avoid explanations, would induce them to adopt any pretext to accomplish it. Their reliance upon a party in this country for support would stimulate them to this conduct; and we may be assured they will not be deficient in the most minute details of every occurrence and every opinion worthy of communication. If, then, an envoy cannot be sent to Paris without the agency of the Senate, will the information you have received, admitting it should be realized, be sufficient ground for convening that body?

These are serious things; they may be productive of serious consequences, and therefore require very serious and cool deliberation. Admitting, however, that the powers of the President during the recess were adequate to such an appointment, where is the character who would go, that unites the proper qualifications for such a mission, and would not be obnoxious to

one party or the other? And what should be done with Mr. M—— in that case?

As the affairs of this country, in their administration, receive great embarrassment from the conduct of characters among ourselves, and as every act of the Executive is misrepresented and tortured with a view to make it appear odious, the aid of the friends to government is peculiarly necessary under such circumstances and at such a crisis as the present. It is unnecessary, therefore, to add, that I should be glad, upon the present and all other important occasions, to receive yours; and as I have great confidence in the abilities and purity of Mr. Jay's views, as well as in his experience, I should wish that his sentiments on the purport of this letter, and other interesting matters as they occur, may accompany yours; for, having no other wish than to promote the true and permanent interests of this country, I am anxious always to compare the opinions of those in whom I confide with one another, and these again (without being bound by them) with my own, that I may extract all the good I can.

Having from a variety of reasons (among which a disinclination to be longer buffeted in the public prints by a set of infamous scribblers) taken my ultimate determination "to seek the post of honor in a private station," I regret exceedingly that I did not publish my valedictory address the day after the adjournment of Congress. This would have preceeded the canvassing for electors (which is commencing with warmth in this State). It would have been announcing *publicly*, what seems to be very well understood, and is industriously propagated *privately*. It would have removed doubts from the minds of *all*, and left the field clear for *all*. It would, by having preceded any unfavorable change in our foreign relations (if any should happen), render my retreat less difficult and embarrassing. And it might have prevented the remarks which, more than probable, will follow a late annunciation—namely, that I delayed it long enough to see that the current was turned against me, before I declared my intention to decline. This is one of the reasons which makes me a little tenacious of the draught I furnished you with, to be modified and corrected.

Having passed, however, what *I now* conceive would have been the *precise* moment to have addressed my constituents, let me ask your opinion (under a full conviction that nothing will shake my determination to withdraw) of the *next* best time, considering the present, and what may, probably, be the existing state of things at different periods previous to the election; or rather the middle of October, beyond which the promulgation of my intentions cannot be delayed. Let me hear from you as soon as it is convenient, and be assured always of the sincere esteem and affectionate regard of

G. WASHINGTON.

[The reply of Hamilton, dated July 5, 1796, is among the papers of Washington.]

HAMILTON TO ELISHA BOUDINOT.

July 7th, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

You will oblige me by letting me have an extract from that part of your mortgage law in New Jersey, which regulates the mode of *cancelling* mortgages—also an extract from the registering book, of the usual manner in which entries for cancelling were made about the years 1771, 1772, and 1773, and by informing me whether these entries have been adjudged *conclusive*—though the order or certificate of the mortgage is not to to be found, the mortgage money not paid, and the fact should appear that the entry was a fraudulent act of the registering officer?

Excuse the trouble I give you, and use me freely in a like case.

How are your election prospects? Do not let the discontent with *Dayton* hazard the main point. 'Tis better by a coalition with him to secure that, though you make some sacrifice of opinion, than to produce a dangerous schism.

Our affairs are critical, and *we* must be dispassionate and wise.

Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 16th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Howell, the commissioner for settling the St. Croix boundary, has been here this week, and started the following questions.

1st. "How far will it be proper for Mr. Howell to use his discretion, in refusing to draw lots for the third commissioner, in case the British commissioner shall persist in proposing a gentleman on his part, who may be, in Mr. Howell's opinion, not an indifferent person?"

2d. "In case inhabitants of Massachusetts are thought objectionable on the part of the British, will not all inhabitants of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia be also if not equally objectionable?"

3d. "Whether the authority of the commissioners can be legally executed, unless the three commissioners sign the declaration required of them by the treaty? In other words, whether, if any two of the commissioners agree, they can finally decide the question?"

I had previously received from Mr. Sullivan (the agent for the United States) a letter, stating the interview between Mr. Howell and Mr. Barclay at Boston, in which it appeared that Mr. Barclay considered the appointment of a commissioner from Massachusetts would be improper, because there was not one from New Brunswick. Yet (Judge Sullivan remarks) Nova Scotia, where Mr. Barclay resides, may be considered as a party, seeing, he said, that he could not take any steps towards the appointment of a third commissioner until he consulted Sir John Wentworth, the governor of that province, on the subject, as well as the governor of New Brunswick. Judge Sullivan further remarks, "that the lands in New Brunswick he considers as owned by proprietors in Nova Scotia, as those in Vermont are by proprietors in New Hampshire, and that therefore commissioners in New Brunswick would be as eligible as in Nova Scotia."

But the most unpleasant part of Judge Sullivan's information is, "that though the third commissioner is to be nominated and chosen, or drawn by the two original commissioners, Mr. Barclay does not consider himself as acting judicially in the business, or as equally responsible to both nations on the point, but considers the appointment as a matter of negotiation between the parties, *and that any advantages which may be gained will be honorable.*"

Mr. Howell also informed me, that Mr. Barclay did avow this extraordinary opinion, and, if it were a just one, as founded on the treaty, it had been better to decide the question by the cast of a dice; but it is so repugnant to the oath which each commissioner is to take, it is impossible that it should be the true construction of the article. I suppose it was chiefly the avowal of this principle on the part of Mr. Barclay, that led Mr. Howell to propose his first query; for while he should propose for the decision of the choice of the third commissioner by lot, a gentleman belonging to another State than Massachusetts, in order to obtain a *disinterested judge*, it would be with extreme repugnance that he would admit the name of an inhabitant of New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, on account of the direct interest of the former, and the probable interest of the latter, as above suggested by Judge Sullivan, especially as Nova Scotia already furnishes one of the commissioners. If, then, it will consist with good faith to refuse to draw lots on so partial a nomination by Mr. Barclay, it is desirable that it might be done. In a report made to Congress by Mr. Jay in April, 1785, on the subject, he proposed that his Britannic Majesty should name his half of the commissioners, "being inhabitants of any of his dominions except those which are situated in and to the west and south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and that the United States should name the other half from any of their countries except Massachusetts." The whole number of commissioners then contemplated by Mr. Jay was six, eight, ten, or twelve.

The 3d question asked by Mr. Howell is, in itself, as well as for the reasons contained in the preceding observations, highly important. The words in the article are: "The said commissioners shall, by a declaration under their hands and seals, decide

what river is the river St. Croix intended by the treaty," not the said commissioners or *any two of them agreeing*. What is the legal construction of this article on this point? No such question arises on the 6th and 7th articles; any three of the five commissioners being competent to a decision, the fifth commissioner being present. On one hand, if *unanimity* be necessary, it will enable either party to counteract any flagrant partiality; on the other, it may defeat a great object of the article—putting a final end to a dispute that might have disagreeable consequences. Permit me to request your attention to this subject, and that you would converse with Mr. Jay upon it. In the course of two or three days I expect Mr. Howell will call on you both at New-York.

GREENLEAF TO HAMILTON.

NEW-YORK, July 27th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The indispensable necessity of an immediate though short respite from business, united with motives of interest, and an unbounded attachment to reputation, induce me to make a proposition to you of a pretty extraordinary nature, but which after due reflection I flatter myself will be deemed not unworthy your attention. My engagements of every possible nature do not exceed twelve hundred thousand dollars, and my real and personal estate may with ease be liquidated and made to produce five millions of dollars; say, rather a million dollars annually for five consecutive years; but in consequence of some important and unexpected delinquencies on the part of persons whose engagements have become due to me, and must be paid from securities given, my own engagements become due more rapidly than my means (without having recourse to improper operations) can be made to answer. If you will now be induced to aid me with your name, responsibility and talents, in the liquidation of my concerns and payment of my engagements, in

such wise that no undue sacrifice of property shall result, and my name be borne through with the credit and propriety it deserves, the one-third part of the net residue of my whole estate, both real and personal, after payment of my engagements, shall become yours, provided you will consent that the mass shall remain undivided for ten years, and constitute the capital of a banking-house, to be established either in this city or at Philadelphia, in our joint names and under your sole guidance, and the profits divided between us in equal portions.

I have reason to believe that, with the aid of your name and our joint responsibility, accompanied with the names of three other persons as trustees for deposited property, it will, by a reputable mode of financing I shall communicate, be practicable for me to obtain the use of a million of dollars at legal interest for the average term of five years, and with this sum I should calculate on being able to pay off all my engagements with due credit and advantage, as considerable amounts are due at distant periods, and may be purchased in at a considerable discount.

If these outlines so far meet your approbation as to induce you to wish my entering into a particular detail, it shall be done at such time as will best suit your leisure and convenience.

HAMILTON TO GREENLEAF.

New-York, July 30th, 1796.

Dear Sir:

I have carefully reflected upon the subject of your letter of the 27th instant.

Though the data which it presents authorize an expectation of large pecuniary advantage, and though I discern nothing in the affair which an individual differently circumstanced might not with propriety enter into; yet, in my peculiar situation, viewed in all its public as well as personal relations, I think myself bound to decline the overture.

With great regard, I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

August 8d, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 1st. I deplore the picture it gives, and henceforth wish to forget there is a Bank or a Treasury in the United States, though I shall not forget my regard to individuals.

I do not see one argument in any possible shape of the thing, for the sale of bank stock, or against that of the other stock, which does not apply vice versa, and I shall consider it as one of the most infatuated steps that ever was adopted.

God bless you,

A. HAMILTON.

It will be known on Thursday whether any thing is to be expected here.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 10th Aug., 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

The principal design of this letter is to inform you that your favor of the 30th ult., with its inclosure, got safe to my hands by the last post, and that the latter shall have the most attentive consideration I am able to give it.

A cursory reading it has had, and the sentiments therein contained are extremely just, and such as ought to be inculcated. The doubt that occurs at first view, is the length of it for a newspaper publication; and how far the occasion would countenance its appearing in any other form, without dilating more on the present state of matters, is questionable. All the columns of a large gazette would scarcely, I conceive, contain the present draught.

But having made no accurate calculation of this matter, I may be much mistaken.

If any matters should occur to you as fit subjects of communication at the opening of the next session of Congress, I would thank you for noting and furnishing me with them. It is my wish and my custom to provide all the materials for the speech in time, that it may be formed at leisure.

With sincere esteem and affectionate regard,

I am always yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

[Hamilton's of Aug. 10th is among the papers of Washington.]

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, 25th Aug., 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have given the paper herewith inclosed several serious and attentive readings, and prefer it greatly to the other draughts, being more copious on material points, more dignified on the whole, and with less egotism; of course, less exposed to criticism, and better calculated to meet the eye of discerning readers (foreigners particularly, whose curiosity, I have little doubt, will lead them to inspect it attentively, and to pronounce their opinions on the performance).

When the first draught was made, besides having an eye to the consideration above mentioned, I thought the occasion was fair (as I had latterly been the subject of considerable invective), to say what is there contained of myself; and as the address was designed in a more especial manner for the yeomanry of this country, I conceived it was proper they should be informed of the object of that abuse—the silence with which it had been

treated, and the consequences which would naturally flow from such unceasing and virulent attempts to destroy all confidence in the executive part of the government; and that it was best to do it in language that was plain and intelligible to their understandings.

The draught now sent comprehends the most, if not all these matters—is better expressed—and, I am persuaded, goes as far as it ought with respect to any personal mention of myself.

I should have seen no occasion myself for its undergoing a revision; but as your letter of the 30th ult., which accompanied it, intimates a wish to do this, and knowing that it can be more correctly done after a writing has been out of sight for some time, than while it is in hand, I send it in conformity thereto, with a request, however, that you would return it as soon as you have carefully re-examined it; for it is my intention to hand it to the public before I leave this city, to which I came for the purpose of meeting General Pinckney, receiving the ministers from Spain and Holland, and for the dispatch of other business which could not be so well executed by written communications between the heads of departments and myself, as by oral conferences. So soon as these are accomplished I shall return; at any rate, I expect to do so by, or before, the tenth of next month, for the purpose of bringing up my family for the winter.

I shall expunge all that is marked in the paper as unimportant, &c., &c.; and as you perceive some marginal notes, written with a pencil, I pray you to give the sentiments so noticed mature consideration. After which, and in every other part, if change or alteration takes place in the draught, let them be so clearly interlined, erased, or referred to in the margin, as that no mistake may happen in copying it for the press.

To what editor in *this* city do you think it had best be sent for publication? Will it be proper to accompany it with a note to him, expressing (as the principal design of it is to remove doubts at the next election), that it is hoped, or expected, that the State printers will give it a place in their gazettes, or preferable to let it be carried by my private secretary to that press which is destined to usher it to the world, and suffer it to work

its way afterwards? If you think the first most eligible, let me ask you to sketch such a note as you may judge applicable to the occasion.

With affectionate regard,
I am always yours,
GEO. WASHINGTON.

Col. A. HAMILTON.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, August 25, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

It would have been agreeable to this government, if we could have agreed to the appointment of Doctor Swaby as the fifth Commissioner; he is really a very candid and honorable man. But for the same reason that we could not satisfy the Commissioners on the part of Great Britain, with the appointment of our countryman, Colonel Trumbull, an equally candid and honorable character, they have been unable to convince us, that under all circumstances, it would be advisable that we should accept Doctor Swaby.

The utmost propriety of conduct has been shown on both sides; and out of several names proposed by each, the British Commissioners selected Colonel Trumbull, and our Commissioners Doctor Swaby, as the names to be put in the urn. The lot has decided in our favor, and Colonel Trumbull, who is on the spot, is the fifth Commissioner. The Board being now complete, will proceed to business without unnecessary delay.

Knowing the immense importance of this Commission to our commerce and navigation, I take the earliest opportunity to give you this information. The surrender of the posts which has taken place, and the very explicit assurances that I have received from the highest authority in this nation, of a resolution to carry into effect the treaty, with the most scrupulous fidelity, make me anxious that nothing should take place on our part,

that would furnish even a pretence, much less a justification, for arresting the further and complete execution of the treaty. The very extraordinary situation of Europe at this moment, should inspire us with great caution, and those whose property depends on the treaties being permitted to go into full effect, should feel and be influenced by this reflection.

Farewell.

Very sincerely yours,

RUFUS KING.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, September 1st, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

About the middle of last week I wrote to you; and that it might escape the eye of the inquisitive (for some of my letters have lately been pried into), I took the liberty of putting it under a cover to Mr. Jay.

Since then, revolving on the paper that was inclosed therein, on the various matters it contained, and on the just expression of the advice or recommendation which was given in it, I have regretted that another subject (which in my estimation is of interesting concern to the well-being of this country) was not touched upon also;—I mean education generally, as one of the surest means of enlightening and giving just ways of thinking to our citizens, but particularly the establishment of a university; where the youth from all parts of the United States might receive the polish of erudition in the arts, sciences, and belles-lettres; and where those who were disposed to run a political course might not only be instructed in the theory and principles, but (this seminary being at the seat of the general government) where the legislature would be in session half the year, and the interests and politics of the nation of course would be

discussed, they would lay the surest foundation for the practical part also.

But that which would render it of the highest importance, in my opinion, is, that the juvenal period of life, when friendships are formed, and habits established, that will stick by one; the youth, or young men from different parts of the United States would be assembled together, and would by degrees discover that there was not that cause for those jealousies and prejudices which one part of the Union had imbibed against another part:—of course, sentiments of more liberality in the general policy of the country would result from it. What but the mixing of people from different parts of the United States during the war rubbed off these impressions? A century, in the ordinary intercourse, would not have accomplished what the seven years' association in arms did; but that ceasing, prejudices are beginning to revive again, and never will be eradicated so effectually by any other means as the intimate intercourse of characters in early life,—who, in all probability, will be at the head of the counsels of this country in a more advanced stage of it.

To show that this is no new idea of mine, I may appeal to my early communications to Congress; and to prove how seriously I have reflected on it since, and how well disposed I have been, and still am, to contribute my aid towards carrying the measure into effect, I inclose you the extract of a letter from me to the governor of Virginia on this subject, and a copy of the resolves of the legislature of that State in consequence thereof.

I have not the smallest doubt that this donation (when the navigation is in complete operation, which it certainly will be in less than two years, will amount to £1200 or £1500 sterling a year, and become a rapidly increasing fund. The proprietors of the federal city have talked of doing something handsome towards it likewise; and if Congress would appropriate some of the western lands to the same uses, funds sufficient, and of the most permanent and increasing sort, might be so established as to invite the ablest professors in Europe to conduct it.

Let me pray you, therefore, to introduce a section in the address expressive of these sentiments, and recommendatory of the

measure, without any mention, however, of my proposed personal contribution to the plan.

Such a section would come in very properly after the one which relates to our religious obligations, or in a preceding part, as one of the recommendatory measures to counteract the evils arising from geographical discriminations.

With affectionate regard,

I am always yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 6th Sept., 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received yesterday your letter of the 4th instant. If the promised paper has not been sent before this reaches you, Mr. Kitt, the bearer of it, who goes to New-York partly on mine and partly on his own business, will bring it safely. I only await here now, and shall in a few days do it impatiently, for the arrival of General Pinckney.

If you think the idea of a university had better be reserved for the speech at the opening of the session, I am content to defer the communication of it until that period; but, even in *tha* case, I would pray you, as soon as convenient, to make a draught for the occasion, predicated on the ideas with which you have been furnished; looking, at the same time, into what was said on this head in my *second* speech to the *first* Congress, merely with a view to see what was said on the subject at that time; and this, you will perceive, was not so much to the point as I want to express now, though it may, if proper, be glanced at, to show that the subject had caught my attention early.

But, to be candid, I much question whether a recommendation of this measure to the legislature will have a better effect *now* than *formerly*. It may show, indeed, my sense of its importance, and that is a sufficient inducement with *me* to bring the

matter before the public, in some shape or another, at the closing scenes of my political exit. My object for proposing to insert it where I did (if not improper), was to set the people ruminating on the importance of the measure, as the most likely means of bringing it to pass.

With much truth,
I am your affectionate,
GEO. WASHINGTON.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, 10th Sept., 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I received this morning a letter from Mr. Monroe, dated Paris, August 28th, of which the following is an extract:

"As soon as the order of this government, as notified by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Barthelemi, the present ambassador at Basle, appeared in the papers, for it was never notified to the foreign ministers here, I applied for information whether orders were issued for the seizure of neutral vessels, stating equally as the motive of my application a report, apparently well authenticated, that one of our vessels had been lately taken near our own coast; and was informed, that no such order was issued, and further, that none such would be, in case the British did not seize our vessels. I am happy to give you this information, because I flatter myself the knowledge of this fact may be useful in respect to our commerce with the country in which you reside. I have in a former letter told you that the British government deny that any order has been lately issued, or that any order exists, authorizing the seizure of neutral cargoes bound to the French ports, as was alleged to be the case in the letter from the French Minister of Foreign Affairs to Barthelemi."

The foregoing extract is all I know from Mr. Monroe respecting the resolution of the French government, communicated

by their Minister of Foreign Affairs to their ambassador at Basle. You will have seen the letter to Barthelemi, which is undoubtedly authentic; and you now have what Mr. Monroe reports as the result of his application on the subject. I make no comments nor inferences. You have the materials, and can make your own interpretations.

Very sincerely yours,
RUFUS KING.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, September 11th, 1796.

Immediately after the publication of the letter from the French government to their minister Barthelemi at Basle, announcing their determination to seize the cargoes of neutral vessels destined to the English ports, I wrote to Mr. Monroe, informing him that the British government disavowed the having issued any recent order for the capture of neutral cargoes bound to French ports, as alleged in the letter to Barthelemi—and by a letter that I received to-day from Mr. Monroe, under date of the 28th of August, he says, that on application for information whether the French government have issued an order for the capture of neutral vessels, he has been informed, that no such order has been issued, and further, that none will be, in case the British did not seize our vessels.

I am not quite able to explain this transaction, I therefore give you such facts as I know you must seek for interpretations.

Very sincerely and affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO BOND.

New-York, September 15th, 1796.

Sir:

Two days since a letter was delivered to me with a declaration of the bearer that it came from Mr. Lyston. On opening the cover, I found nothing, except a letter from Captain Cochran (which, though not addressed, would appear to have been written to some public agent of Great Britain), and a declaration of *David Wilson* and *Thomas Marshall* respecting the ship *Eliza*. The superscription of the packet resembling your handwriting, I concluded that it might have come from you, and that by some mistake the letter you had written me had been omitted, and that on discovery of omission, it would have been forwarded by another opportunity. Finding after two days' waiting that the expectation has not been realized, I have determined to write to you on the subject.

Mr. Charles Wilkes had previously applied to me concerning this affair, and had submitted to my consideration various papers. The result was that I discouraged a judicial prosecution. My reasons are these:

Taking it to be true, as stated, that Captain Huffey brought from *the shore within our territory* persons who *by force* aided him to rescue the captured vessel, I am of opinion that *this circumstance* would give jurisdiction of the case to our courts on the application of the capturing party.

But when on such application any of our courts should hold jurisdiction, it would in my judgment go into the merits and examine the validity of the capture.

Here these facts occur: that the Eliza, being a transport vessel in the service of Great Britain, was captured by a French privateer, fitted out of some port of France by *Barney* an American citizen, in quality of *armateur; Leveille*, probably a Frenchman, captain by commission; and was afterwards condemned as prize by the sentence of a court of admiralty at Dunkirk—and as far as the direct proof goes, purchased in virtue of that sentence by an American citizen.

It is conjectured that two-thirds of the vessel may have belonged to a French house, Messrs. De Baques; because it appears that Huffey paid two thirds of the purchase-money in a bill drawn by that house. But this is evidently a mere circumstance of suspicion, and wholly inconclusive. Why may not the *De-Baques* have been factors or agents for *Huffey?* Why may not *Huffey* have purchased their draft towards the payment? One or the other of the two latter suppositions would no doubt prevail with the court, if there was no collateral proof to the contrary.

It is also conjectured that the Eliza may have continued the property of *Barney.* But all the documents now in the power of the captor speak a contrary language. This suspicion, then, however just it may be in fact, cannot be supported.

The question then is, would the equipment of the privateer by *Barney* be sufficient to invalidate the purchase by a neutral citizen under the sentence of a court of the capturing power?

No opinion of any theoretic writer, nor, as I believe, any usage of any nation, nor the decisions of courts of admiralty, will authorize, in my judgment, an affirmative answer to that question.

If Mr. Barney comes within the 21st article of our treaty with Great Britain, it would make him liable, if *taken by Great Britain,* to be punished *as a pirate.* But it will be observed that the stipulation would not oblige the United States to treat him as such. And the article being confined to personal punishment, may be supposed not to contemplate the confiscation of property captured by such a person.

But it would be to go an unheard of length to pronounce null the prize made under such circumstances, by a vessel fitted out of the ports of the belligerent power, and regularly commissioned, and after a sentence of condemnation.

Therefore, and as the property in question is of little value, and as smart damages would be likely to attend a failure of the prosecution, I advised against it, as I now still do.

Yet if Captain Cochran, or any person acting on his behalf, shall *desire the experiment to be made,* however unpromising in my

view, I shall esteem it a professional duty, and due to justice to a foreign power, to put the affair in a course of judicial investigation.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, October 17th, 1796.

Permit me to ask your opinion on the following points:

1st. Ought we, or ought we not, to permit sales of prizes to French *national* ships of war as formerly, on payments of duties?

2d. In case of an affirmative answer to the first question, What is to be regarded as evidence of a national ship? will the certificate of a French commissioner in the West Indies, or of a consul or the French minister in the United States, be sufficient, provided nothing appears in the commission of the vessel contradictory to their certificate?

3d. May we keep an inspector on board a prize during her continuance in our ports?

4th. In case a prize requires reparation, may a *part* of her cargo be sold, sufficient to defray her expenses on payment of duties?

5th. In case a prize vessel is condemned as incapable of reparation, may the prize goods be exported in our own or other neutral vessels, as French property?

6th. Who is to judge when it is necessary to unlade a vessel for the purpose of making reparations? Is the suggestion of a French prize-master or consul sufficient?

7th. May the cargoes of prizes be sold, or any part of them, for the reparation of any vessel, or the payment of any expense not incidental to the identical vessel in which the cargoes arrived?

8th. Who is to judge of the quantity sufficient for making reparations, in case any sale is lawful?

9th. If, after a vessel is condemned as incapable of repara-

tion, she should be notwithstanding repaired, is she to be permitted to depart?

10th. Is it, or is it not, the right of the collector to treat French prizes in the same manner as vessels which report themselves as bound to a foreign port, or which arrive in distress? See section 18th and 88th of the collection law.

The 18th and 88th sections of the collection law appear to have provided for cases not very dissimilar from those of prizes to privateers, which, in contemplation of law, must be considered as coming into our ports merely for refreshment; the requiring of a bond on their departure may not, however, be proper.

We shall, on the subject of these prizes, be vexed with every kind of uncandid ingenuity. There is danger of losing the revenue, while at the same time sales may not be prevented. You will see that not only public questions which affect our neutrality, but revenue questions are concerned; there are too many who will not miss a good opportunity of purchasing West India produce, when it can be had below the market price.

In every point of view the subject is embarrassing. Please to reply as soon as possible.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

ALBANY, October 27th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 17th instant found me at Albany, attending the Supreme Court. I have no copy of the treaty with Great Britain at hand, but I am well satisfied, from memory, that the true interpretation of that treaty, enforcing, in this respect, the true rule of neutrality, forbids our permitting the sale of a prize, taken and brought in by a *French national ship*, equally as if by a privateer; and that the *prize vessel* herself with her cargo, ought to depart our ports. I hasten to give you my opinion thus far. I reserve to consider more at leisure, what excep-

tions absolute necessity may justify. But this is clear, that as far as it may admit any, the exception must be *measured* and *restricted* by the *necessity*, and as soon as possible you must return into the path of the treaty.

Thus if the prize vessel was absolutely insufficient to proceed to sea, her cargo ought to be sent out of the country in another vessel; and care ought to be taken that it does not go out under false colors. Our own officers, no doubt, *must inspect* and *ascertain* any case of necessity which may be suggested.

Pray, my good friend, let there be no evasions.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

November 1st, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote you a line from Albany, expressing an opinion from *memory*, that our treaty with Great Britain prohibited the sale of prizes made by French *national* ships. Being just returned to town, I have looked into the article which related to the point, and I *fear* that opinion was wrong. In a day or two I will write to you more particularly.

Adet's late communication demands a very *careful* and *well-managed* answer.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, 2d November, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

On Monday afternoon I arrived in this city, and among the first things which presented themselves to my view, was Mr. Adet's letter to the Secretary of State, published by his order at the moment it was presented.

The object in doing this is not difficult of solution; but whether the *publication*, in the manner it appears, is by order of the Directory, or an act of his own, is yet to be learned. If the first, he has executed a duty only; if the latter, he has exceeded it, and is himself responsible for the indignity offered to this government by such publication, without allowing it time to reply —or to take its own mode of announcing the intentions of his country towards the commerce of these United States.

In the other case, should there be, in your opinion, any difference in my reception and treatment of that minister in his visits at the public rooms (I have not seen him yet, nor do not expect to do it before Tuesday next), and what difference should be made, if any?

He complains in his letter, that he has received no answers to the remonstrances in former communications (the dates of which are given). The fact is, that one at least of these remonstrances were accompanied by as indecent charges, and as offensive expressions as the letters of Genet were ever marked with; and besides, the same things, on former occasions, had been replied to (as the Secretary of State informs me), over and over again.

That the letter which he has now given to the public will be answered, and (to a candid mind) I hope satisfactorily, is certain; but ought it to be published *immediately*, or not? This question has two sides to it, both of which are important. If the answer does not accompany the letter, the antidote will not keep pace with the poison—and it may and undoubtedly would be said, it is because the charges are just, and the consequences had been predicted. On the other hand, may not the dignity of the government be committed by a newspaper dispute with the minister of a foreign nation, and an apparent appeal to the people? And would it not be said also, that we can bear *every thing* from one of the belligerent powers, but *nothing* from another of them? I could enlarge on this subject, but add nothing, I am certain, that your own reflections thereon will not furnish. Whether the answer is published now or not, would it be proper, do you conceive, at the ensuing session, which will close the political scene

with me, to bring the French affairs, since the controversy with Genet, fully before Congress? In doing this, it is to be noticed that there is such a connection between them and our transactions with Great Britain, as to render either imperfect without the other; and so much of the latter as relates to the treaty with that country, has already been refused to that body; not because there was any thing contained therein that all the world might not have seen, but because it was claimed as a matter of right, and the compliance therewith would have established a dangerous precedent.

Since I wrote to you from Mount Vernon, on the eve of my departure from that place, and on my way hither, I received a letter from Sir John Sinclair—an extract of which I inclose you—on the subject of an agricultural establishment. Though not such an enthusiast as he is, I am nevertheless deeply impressed with the benefits which would result from such an institution; and if you see no impropriety in the measure, I would leave it as a recommendatory one in the speech at the opening of the session; which probably will be the last I shall ever address to that or any other public body.

It must be obvious to every man who considers the agriculture of this country (even in the best improved parts of it), and compares the produce of our lands with those of other countries, no ways superior to them in *natural fertility*, how miserably defective we are in the management of them; and that if we do not fall on a better mode of treating them, how ruinous it will prove to the landed interest. Ages will not produce a systematic change without public attention and encouragement; but a few years more of increased sterility will drive the inhabitants of the Atlantic States westwardly for support; whereas, if they were taught how to improve the old, instead of going in pursuit of new and productive soils, they would make those acres which now scarcely yield them any thing, turn out beneficial to themselves—to the mechanics, by supplying them with the staff of life on much cheaper terms—to the merchants, by increasing their commerce and exportation—and to the community generally, by the influx of wealth resulting therefrom. In a word, it is in my

estimation, a great national object, and, if stated as fully as the occasion and circumstances will admit, I think it must appear so. But whatever may be the reception or fate of the recommendation, I shall have discharged my duty in submitting it to the consideration of the legislature.

As I have a very high opinion of Mr. Jay's judgment, candor, honor, and discretion (though I am not in the habit of writing so freely to him as to you), it would be very pleasing to me if you would show him this letter (although it is a hurried one, my time having been much occupied since my arrival by the heads of the departments, and with the papers which have been laid before me), and let me have, for consideration, your joint opinions on the several matters herein stated.

You will recollect that the conduct to be observed towards Mr. Adet, must be decided on before Tuesday next; that is, if he comes to the public room, whether he is to be received with the same cordiality as usual, or with coolness; and you will do me the justice to believe, that in this instance, and every other, I wish it to be such as will promote the true policy and interest of the country, at the same time that a proper respect for its dignity is preserved. My own feelings I put out of the question.

There is in the conduct of the French government relative to this business an inconsistency, a duplicity, a delay, or a something else, which is unaccountable upon honorable ground. It appears that the order under which Mr. Adet has acted is dated in July (early), and yet Mr. Monroe had been led to believe (though much dissatisfaction he says has appeared), that no such order had, or would be issued, unless Great Britain set the example; and in a letter of August the 28th, he writes Mr. King to that effect, as the latter officially informs the Secretary of State. But I am fatigued with this and other matters which crowd upon me, and shall only add that I am very affectionately

Yours,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S.—I find I have not time before the hour for closing the mail arrives to take the promised extract from Sir John Sinclair's

letter, I therefore send the original, with a request that it may soon be returned, as I have given it no acknowledgment—the articles which he requests my acceptance of are not yet come to hand.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 8d Nov., 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

After my letter of yesterday was dispatched to you, the draft of the answer to Mr. Adet was presented for my approbation, with the opinions of the gentlemen about me that it would be expedient to publish it, and without delay.

It appeared also by information from the Secretary of State, that as far as public opinion had been expressed on the occasion, that this measure was looked to and expected. These considerations, and a conviction, if the publication was to take place otherwise than through the medium of Congress, the sooner it happened the more likely it would be to obviate the bad impressions it was calculated to make on the public mind, induced an acquiescence on my part. I do not, nevertheless, think it free from those objections which I mentioned in my last; as it is not probable that the correspondence will end with the Secretary's letter.

I give you the trouble of this note to account for the publication which you will find in the gazettes of this morning, and to rescue my conduct from the imputation of inconsistency.

There are other parts of my letter not involved in this determination, which await the opinions I have asked, and on which I should be glad to hear from you (and in the manner which has been required in preceding letters), as soon as it is convenient.

I am your affectionate friend,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

November 3, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have more carefully examined our treaty with Great Britain, and I return to the opinion given you from Albany. My hesitation yesterday arose from the terms of the twenty-fourth article, which were confined to *privateers*, a word that has an appropriate sense, meaning *ships of private persons commissioned to cruise.* But the following article contains the equivalent one to that with France, upon which we refused all bringing in and sale of prizes by her enemies. The words are, "no refuge," &c., the *major* including the *minor.* And though France, by our treaty with her, may *bring in* prizes, yet the treaty gives her *no right to sell.* The clause in question, in the English treaty, cannot take away the right she before had, to bring in her prizes; but as she had not a positive right to sell, it will oblige her to *depart* with them: in other words, it will preclude her from whatever she has not a positive right to. This also is Mr. Jay's opinion, and it is certainly agreeable to the whole spirit of the treaty.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

November 4, 1796.

SIR:

I have lately been honored with two letters from you—one from Mount Vernon, the other from Philadelphia, which came to hand yesterday. I immediately sent the last to Mr. Jay, and conferred with him last night. We settled our opinion on one point, viz.: That whether Mr. Adet acted with or without instruction from his government, in publishing his communication, he committed a disrespect towards our government, which ought not to pass *unnoticed*, and would most properly be *noticed* to him

as the representative or agent. That the manner of noticing it in the first instance, at least, ought to be *negative;* that is, by the personal conduct of the President towards the minister. That the true rule on this point would be to receive the minister at your levees with a *dignified reserve*, holding an *exact medium* between an *offensive coldness*, and *cordiality*. The point is a nice one to be hit, but no one will know better how to do it than the President.

Self-respect, and the necessity of discouraging further insult, requires that *sensibility* should be manifested; on the other hand, the importance of not widening a breach, which may end in rupture, demands great *measure* and *caution* in the mode.

Mr. Jay and myself are both agreed also, that no immediate publication of the reply which may be given, ought to be made, for this would be like joining in *an appeal* to the public—would countenance and imitate the irregularity, and would not be dignified; nor is it necessary for any present purpose of the government. Mr. Jay *inclined* to think that the reply ought to go through Mr. Pinckney to the Directory, with only a short note to Adet acknowledging the reception of his paper, and informing him that this mode will be taken. I am not yet satisfied that this course will be the best. We are both to consider further, and confer. You will shortly be informed of the result.

But whatever be the mode adopted, it is certain that the reply will be one of the most delicate papers that has proceeded from our government, in which it will require much care and nicety to steer between *sufficient* and too *much justification*, between *self-respect* and the *provocation* of further insult or injury; and that will, at the same time, save a great political interest which this step of the French government opens to us. Did I not know how guarded you will yourself be, I should be afraid of Mr. Pickering's warmth. We must, if possible, avoid rupture with France, who, if not effectually checked, will, in the insolence of power, become no less troublesome to us than to the rest of the world.

I dedicate *Sunday* to the execution of your commands in preparing certain heads. You will speedily hear again from me.

Most affectionately and respectfully, I have the honor to be, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

Nov. 5, 1796.

SIR:

Yesterday, after the departure of the post, I received your letter of the 3d. I have since seen the answer to *Adet*. I perceive in it nothing intrinsically exceptionable, but something in the manner a little epigrammatical and *sharp*. I make this remark freely, because the card now to be played is perhaps the most delicate that has occurred in your administration; and nations, like individuals, sometimes get into squabbles from the manner more than the matter that passes between them. It is all-important to us—first, if possible, to avoid rupture with France; secondly, if that cannot be, to evince to the people that there has been an unequivocal disposition to avoid it. Our discussions, therefore, ought to be *calm*, *smooth*, inclined to the argumentative; when remonstrance and complaint are unavoidable, carrying upon the face of them a *reluctance* and *regret*, mingling a steady assertion of our rights and adherence to principle with the language of moderation, and, as long as it can be done, of friendship.

I am the more particular in these observations, because I know that Mr. Pickering, who is a very worthy man, has nevertheless something warm and angular in his temper, and will require much a vigilant, moderating eye.

I last evening saw Doctor Bailey, our health officer, who tells me that the French consul here, in conversation with an assistant of the doctor's, who is a refugee from St. Domingo, expressed a desire to make arrangements for the sick of a French fleet expected shortly to arrive at this port. I thought this circumstance worth communication.

With the most respectful attachment, I have the honor to be sir, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 6, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I fear that your opinion of Nov. 3d has been founded on a partial view of the case.

You will remember that it has been all along a received opinion, that the French had a right by treaty to enjoy an *indefinite asylum* in our ports, but that they could not claim the privilege of *selling prizes in our ports.*

The privilege of an indefinite asylum was also granted to *British ships of war and letters of marque, provided they had not made prizes of French vessels.*

I do not, therefore, see that the 25th article of the British treaty can be construed to abridge a right which we have acknowledged to be accorded to France under our prior treaty, especially as this article saves the rights of France expressly.

The right of *selling prizes* stands on different ground. It might have been refused to France in *all cases.* It was, however, granted by the President in *all cases.* The British treaty takes away this privilge from *privateers*, but it leaves the cases of prizes to neutral *ships* as formerly. The United States may pass a *law* to take away the privilege of selling prizes to national ships, but they have passed no law on the subject. The President's decisions now must be consistent with his former decisions, except where treaties and laws require a change. As before mentioned, there is no *law.* The British treaty speaks only of *privateers*, and it has been ever held that a stipulation affecting privateers could not be extended to affect neutral ships.

In short, though I wish your opinion may be found tenable, yet I do not at present see how it can be maintained. This, you will see, renders some of the other questions proposed by me both difficult and important.

There was no inclosure in your letter. Have we done right with Mr. Adet? I wish to know, as we may hear further. Must we, or must we not, publish further in the papers? If so, under what circumstances?

The federal ticket is lost here. There are still *hopes* that Mr. Adams will be elected, but nothing more. I hope *Mr. P.* will be supported, as the next best thing which can be done.

Pray write to our Eastern friends.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

November 9th, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received yesterday your letter of the 6th, and immediately wrote some additional letters to the eastward, enforcing what I had before written. Pennsylvania does not surprise me.

I have reconsidered the opinion given to you on the third, and see no reason to change it. The reasoning which leads me to the conclusion, has not been sufficiently explained, I will therefore be more particular.

The articles in our treaty with France, which respect the subject, are the seventeenth and twenty-second.

The seventeenth consists of two parts.

Firstly, It grants *asylum* in our ports for French ships of war and *privateers, with their prizes;* and with liberty *to carry them freely thence to their own ports.*

Secondly. It prohibits the giving refuge, in our ports, *to such as shall have made prize of the subjects, or property, of the French.* It grants no right to sell prizes in our ports, neither does the *letter* of the article prohibit *prizes*, made of the French, from coming into our ports. It only prohibits *the instrument* of making the prizes. But the construction justly adopted by the President was, that the prohibition, in its true spirit, excluded the *bringing in of prizes*, whether coming with, or without, the capturing vessels. 'Tis upon this part of the treaty, alone, that prizes made by *national vessels* of Great Britain, were excluded from our ports. For,

The twenty-second article with France is wholly confined to *privateers;* prohibiting those of other nations *to fit* or to sell their *prizes* in our ports.

This article, had it stood alone, would have left us as free to admit British *national* ships, with *their prizes*, into our ports, as our twenty-fourth article with Great Britain leaves us free to admit French national ships, with their prizes. For these articles are the exact equivalents of each other. So that, as before remarked, the prohibition of the *coming in*, or *sale in*, our ports, *of prizes made upon the French by British national ships*, was derived, by *construction* and *implication*, from the seventeenth article of our treaty with France.

It follows, that this article was considered as competent to prevent the *coming in and sale* of prizes.

If so, the same, or equivalent, terms in the British treaty, must be competent to the same thing.

Now the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain has equivalent terms. We there read, that "no shelter or refuge shall be given in their ports to *such as have made a* prize upon the subjects, or citizens, of either of the contracting parties; but if forced, by stress of weather or the danger of the sea, to enter therein, particular care shall be taken to hasten their departure; and to cause them to retire as soon as possible." This prohibition includes here, as in the seventeenth article of our treaty with France, a prohibition to sell prizes in our ports; not the *prizes* of *privateers only*, but prizes generally.

But France, it is answered, had a prior right, by the seventeenth article of our treaty with her, "to come and bring prizes into our ports."

True, she had this right, and must have it still, notwithstanding the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain; but she had no prior right, by treaty, *to sell prizes* in our ports; and consequently, as the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain excludes, as the *minor* of a *major*, the selling of prizes in our ports, the exclusion, so far, is in force, because it contravenes no *prior right* of France. As far as the treaty with France gives a right, inconsistent with the above twenty-fifth article, that right forms an exception; but the exception must be only coextensive with the right. The conclusion is that France retains the right of *asylum*, but is excluded from the right of selling.

This gives effect to the twenty-fifth article with Great Britain, far as the treaty-right of France does not require an exception.

And this construction ought to be favored, because it bes comports with the rule of neutrality.

It will also best agree with the President's former decisions He permitted France to sell prizes; not because treaty gave her a right, but because he did not see clearly any law of the country, or of nations, that forbid it. But consistency does not require that this permission shall continue, if there be any thing in the treaty with Great Britain against it. Consistency, however, does require that the same latitude of construction should be given to the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain, as was before given to the seventeenth article of our treaty with France. The same latitude will, as I apprehend, exclude the sale of prizes, by France, in the case in question.

I regret extremely the publication of the reply to *Adet*, otherwise than through the channel of Congress. The sooner the Executive gets out of the newspapers the better. What may now be in its power, will depend on circumstances which *are to occur*.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, November 10, 1796.

SIR:

I have been employed in making, and have actually completed a rough draft on the following heads:—"*National University; Military Academy; Board of Agriculture;* establishment of such manufactories on *public account* as are relative to the equipment of army and navy, *to the extent of the public demand for supply*, and excluding all the branches already well established in the country; the *gradual* and *successive* creation of a navy; compensations to public officers; *reinforcement* of provisions for public debt." I send you this enumeration, that you may see the objects which I shall prepare for. But I must beg your patience

till the beginning of the next week for the transmission of the draft, as I am a good deal pressed for time.

The legislature having appointed Mr. Laurance district judge, a successor will of course be to be provided. A conviction of his competency, a high opinion of his worth, and a long-established personal friendship, induce me to take the liberty of *precipitating* a recommendation to you of Mr. TROUP, the present clerk of the District and Circuit Court (the attorney of the district being known to be disinclined to the office). Mr. Troup is a lawyer, professionally very respectable, so that his practice is inferior in productiveness to no other; but he has by the most unexceptionable means acquired a property sufficient to make it reasonable in him to withdraw from practice, upon a salary such as that of the district judge, and latterly his health has somewhat suffered from a long course of *excessive application.* His moral character is without an imputation of any sort; indeed no man in the State is better esteemed than this gentleman; so that, I believe, the appointment would be considered as altogether fit. I trust, however, that in expressing myself thus strongly, it will not occasion to you a moment's embarrassment, if any candidate more agreeable to you shall occur.

Very respectfully and affectionately, I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

November 11, 1796.

SIR:

My anxiety for such a course of things as will most promise a continuance of peace to the country, and in the contrary event a full justification of the President, has kept my mind dwelling on the late reply to Mr. Adet; and, though it is a thing that cannot be undone, yet, if my ideas are correct, the communication of them may not be wholly useless for the future. The more I have considered that paper, the less I like it.

I think it is to be regretted that answers were not given to the preceding communications of Mr. Adet. For silence commonly carries with it the appearance of *hauteur* and *contempt*. And even if the paper to be answered is offensive, 'tis better and less hazardous to harmony to say so, with calmness and moderation, than to say nothing. Silence is only then to be adopted, when things have come to such a state with a minister, that it is the intention to break with him. And even in this case, if there is still a disposition to maintain harmony with his government, a reply ought to go through our own organ to it, so as to distinguish between the minister and the government.

The reason given for not having answered the inquiry respecting the impressment of our seamen is too broad. When two nations have relations to each other, and one is at war, the other at peace; if the one at peace suffers liberties to be taken with it by the enemy of the one at war, which turns to the detriment of the latter, it is a fair subject of inquiry and discussion. The questions may be asked, How does this happen? What measures are taking to prevent a repetition or continuance? There is always possibility of connivance, and this possibility gives a right to inquire, and imposes an obligation to enter into friendly explanation. 'Tis not a matter of indifference to our friend, what conduct of its enemy we permit towards ourselves. Much indeed in all these cases depends on the manner of the inquiry; but I am satisfied the principle is as I state it, and the ground assumed by Mr. Pickering, in the latitude of the expression, untenable.

These opinions are not confined to me. Though most people like the air of what is called spirit in Mr. Pickering's letter, yet some of the best friends of the cause whisper cautiously remarks similar to the above.

It is a question now well worth considering, whether, if a handsome opportunity of rectifying should not occur with Mr. Adet, it may not be expedient specially to instruct Mr. Pinckney to make the explanations, putting our backwardness here to the score of the manner of the inquiry, and qualifying the generality of our principle—without giving up our right of judging of the measure of our compliance in similar cases.

I know you will so well appreciate the motives to these observations, that I run no risk in being thought officious, and I therefore freely transmit them, being always,

With due respect and attachment, &c.

TALLEYRAND TO HAMILTON.

PARIS, 12 NOV. 1796.

MON CHER COLONEL HAMILTON:

Vous recevez en même tems que cette lettre une reclamation de M. de Beaumarchais que je confie avec un entier abandon à vous pour obtenir de l'Amérique une justice qu'il invoque infructueusement depuis 20 ans. Vous avez apprecié dans le tems les services qu'il a rendu a votre pays. Il pense qu'un nouvel examen de son affaire conduisoit encore a des resultats plus favorables. Je n'ai pas craint de lui promettre votre interet et vos conseils pour la suite de son affaire, il sera heureux pour lui d'etre défendu par vous: ce sera le plus sur garant de l'equité de sa demande. Beaucoup de personnes s'y interessent ici. Je partage sincerement cet interét et desire vivement pouvoir vous l'inspirer. Du reste en reclamant vos lumieres et vos conseils dans le cours de cette affaire. M. de Beaumarchais n'a garde de vous demander les démarches qu'elle pourra entrainer; c'est de diriger qu'il vous prie: il doit s'en remettre pour toute la partie active a M. Sterret qu'il sait que vous estimez, et a qui son intention est d'offrir un interét proportionné au succés de la reclamation.

Quoique je suis depuis deux mois en France, le pays est encore bien nouveau pour moi; je passe mon tems a l'etudier—voila au vrai ce que j'y fais et pas autre chose. A mon arrivée les papiers publics francais at anglais se sont amusés a beaucoup prononcer mon nom, a me supposer des vues–même des occupations: de tout cela il n'y a pas un mot de vrai—il faut savoir la langue d'un pays, avant d'oser y parler et j'en suis encore bein loin.

On ma beaucoup quéstionné sur l'Amerique au moment de

mon arrivé, j'ai repondu, comme j'y le devais, et en des termes que, je crois, vous auraient convenu. Je n'ai pas manqué sur tout de dire que je ne croyais point a l'eloignment des Americains pour les Francois, quand même cet eloignment éxisterait il n'y aurait rien de plus naturel d'apres la conduite folle et audacieuse des agents de la France qui s'etaient toujours montrés l'ennemis de votre gouvernment.

Adieu,—cher Colonel Hamilton. · En reclamant vos bons offices pour M. de Beaumarchais j'use avec toute confiance du droit que me donne l'amitié que vous m'avez toujours montrée. Vous m'avez promis de disposer de moi dans toutes les occasions —je vous somme de votre promesse pour vous et pour vos amis.

Soyez assez bien pour presenter mes hommages respectueuses a Madame Hamilton; me s'appeller au souvenir de votre famille, et faire mes meillieurs compliments a MM. Seton, Nic. Low, Hammond. Votre petit Jean, a t'il toujours autant de génie? Vous vous souviendrez toujours, j'espere, que vous m'avez promis de m'envoyer dans quelques annés votre fils ainé pour lui faire faire son voyage de France.

Je vous renouvelle, cher Colonel Hamilton, l'assurance des sentiments d'amitié et de respect.

Avec lesquels, j'ai l'honneur d'etre,

Votre, &c.

CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 12th Nov., 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

In due time, and in good order, I received your letters dated the 4th, 5th, and 10th inst., and shall be mindful of their contents.

What construction do you put upon the information received through the assistant of Dr. B——? and what notice, if any, should it meet with *now*, or hereafter, if application should be made for leave, or the event take place without?

Having some time since called upon the different Secretaries for such matters (within their respective departments) as required to be communicated to Congress at the opening of the session, the inclosed papers are from two of them; one has given a shape to the ideas. From the Treasury Department I have received nothing yet, and presume nothing will come from the Secretary of it, except such matters as are of the fiscal kind, founded upon facts and statements.

The Secretary of War has closed his notes, or draft, with a communication, a declaration, and an invocation, which I had no intention of introducing, if such sentiments could be avoided with that decent respect which is due to such members of both houses as have been uniform and steady in their support of those measures of government, which I have thought the interest and welfare of this country required, and accordingly recommended.

The reasons which have operated a reluctance in my mind to touch on this subject at the *opening* of the session, are two—first, that it might be supposed it was introduced for the purpose of a complimentary notice of the event, by those who might feel a disposition to offer it; and, secondly, that it might not embarrass others who had rather be silent; much less put it in the power of a third set, to oppose (if it should be attempted) sentiments of this sort in the answer to the speech.

These being my reasons—judge of their force. If they outweigh what may be considered as indifference, slight, or disrespectful in me towards the body to whom the address is made, let them prevail. If not, adopt in whole, or in part, or new-model altogether to your liking, the sentiments or expressions of Mr. M'Henry.

Among the things noted in my memorandums, and not to be found in the inclosures, is an intimation to this effect, viz.: that from the best information I have been able to obtain, and from the best view I have of the general system of European politics, and of the state of matters in the Mediterranean in particular, our commerce in that quarter will always be upon a precarious establishment, unless a protecting force is given to it. If Congress, in their investigation of the subject, should coincide in this

opinion, it will rest with their wisdom to decide whether that trade in particular is of sufficient importance to countenance the expense of its protection. How much beyond this to extend the view towards a navy, in the present uncertain state of our fiscal concerns, merits consideration. My own sentiments lead strongly to the means of commencement.

This last article, in addition to the several matters contained in the inclosures, and what will naturally flow from the texts mentioned in your letter, together with a general reference to the proper officers for estimates, papers, &c., alluded to in the speech, will comprehend every thing that has occurred to me, as necessary to be mentioned at the *opening* of the session; and I would thank you much for letting me have the whole as early in next week as your convenience will permit—at any rate on Saturday—with your opinion on the propriety of giving Congress a full statement relatively to the situation of our affairs with France, as suggested in my letter of the —— instant.

With affectionate regard,

I am always yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

P. S. I was in the very act of closing this letter when yours of yesterday's date came to hand; due consideration shall be given to the contents of it.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

PHILADELPHIA, November 17th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

You must feel interested in knowing how our affairs stand with France; I give you a summary of them.

The note to Colonel Pickering contains a summary of all the complaints of France, since the commencement of the present war. They are as follow.

That the courts of the United States have taken cognizance of prizes to French vessels.

That the treaty has been misconstrued by permitting the admission of British ships which have at *some time* made prizes of French vessels. Mr. Adet's construction is, that a British ship, which at *any time* or in *any place* has made a prize, ought to be denied asylum.

Complaints are made of the proclamation of neutrality, and of the *promptness* with which the President requested Congress to enact laws for preserving our neutrality. The questions proposed by the President before Genet's arrival are recited at length, and commented on as evidences of unfriendliness to France.

Lists of almost all the particular cases respecting privateers, &c., are made out, and the decisions of the Executive censured.

It is said, that the government has manifested partiality against France, by the alacrity which marked its conduct, in enforcing the laws against them, and by tardiness in prosecuting the British.

That the American government *deceived* France in respect to Mr. Jay's mission.

That the treaty with Great Britain is a violation of the treaty with France, is equivalent to a treaty of alliance, and ought not to have been made during the war.

A fulfilment of the 11th article of our treaty with France is required, which stipulates that powers granted to other nations shall become common; this, Mr. Adet says, will justify the French in taking British property on board American vessels, and in extending contraband as defined by the British treaty.

For these reasons, the commercial relations founded on treaty are to be respected until the *government returns to itself.* Nevertheless the French nation regards the people as its friends.

The people, in a declamatory rhapsody, are directly addressed in this style, "O ye Americans!" An appeal is made to their passions; the injuries of the British during the last war are recounted, and the assistance of the French nation extolled. It is said,

that the suspension of the minister's functions is not to be regarded as an act of *hostility*, but of *just resentment* against the *government*. When the government *returns to itself*, the French will forget the injury.

France is said to be terrible to its enemies, but magnanimous to its friends, quick to resent injuries, but easily appeased.

The Executive and Mr. Jay are treated with personal indignity.

On the whole this is by far the most bold attempt to govern this country which has been made; it is necessary to come to issue. Measures to prevent any panic or dissension of the public opinion are necessary. We have the right of the question, but whether we shall be overruled by force, will partly depend on the spirit of the people, partly on the issue of the campaign in Italy and Germany.

I am ever yours,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

Dec. 8th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of December 6th. The warrant for the sum *due* to the Bank of New-York was issued punctually. By some neglect or accident in the Treasurer's office, it remained undischarged. I have taken measures for the payment.

By a letter from Mr. Wilkes, I find that the bank claim a payment of interest by way of discount on the 200,000 dollars continued on loan on the security of a deposit of stock. This was not understood by me, nor does it appear a reasonable condition. I will, however, take measures to prevent any disadvantage to the bank from the misconception of what was their construction.

The loan of 200,000 dollars has really operated as an advance by the *Branch Bank*, and has been no other relief than as it

enabled me to assist the bank here in a critical moment. These institutions have all been mismanaged; I look upon them with terror. They are at present the curse, and, I fear, they will prove the ruin of the government. Immense operations depend on a trifling capital fluctuating between the coffers of the different banks. At present business in this city is on the point of stagnation.

I will thank you to inform the president of the New-York Bank, or any other confidential person, that they may rest assured of as full and cordial assistance in any pressure of their affairs, as shall be in my power.

I think, however, that they must principally rely on sales of stock, and, in my opinion, any sacrifice ought to be preferred to a continuance of temporary expedients. In the present state of the Treasury anticipated payments are not practicable.

It is matter of importance that the proxies for electing directors, should not be placed in improper hands. Some attention to this will be useful, if you find it convenient, without exciting suspicions of treasury influence.

The Treasury of New-York might have a number of votes, which would be useful.

Perhaps intimations from the Bank of New-York had best to come through you. They will be confidential.

The President will lay the correspondence with France since Genet's time, before Congress. A letter is preparing by Colonel Pickering to Mr. Pinckney, in answer to Adet.

Tom Payne has published a book against the President, containing the most infamous calumnies. It is a systematical measure of France to destroy the public confidence in the friends of government, or "*Washington Faction.*"

The question whether our commerce is or is not to be attacked, depends entirely on the military operations in Germany and Italy.

If you will part with the Reports of the British Commissioners of Accounts, I shall be glad to purchase them. The first volume is with you, the second and third are here. I shall be glad to have the book soon, with a bill including Gallatin's work.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

Nov. 19th, 1796.

SIR:

I duly received your letter of the 12th instant. My avocations have not permitted me sooner to comply with your desire. I have looked over the papers, and suggested alterations and corrections; and I have also numbered the paragraphs, I., II., III., &c., in the order in which it appears to me eligible they should stand in the speech.

I thought, upon full reflection, you could not avoid an allusion to your retreat, in order to express your sense of the support of Congress, but that the simplest manner of doing it was to be preferred. A paragraph is offered accordingly.

I believe the commencement of a navy ought to be contemplated. Our fiscal concerns, if Congress please, can easily be rendered efficient; if not, 'tis their fault, and ought not to prevent any suggestion which the interest of the country may require.

The paragraph in your letter respecting our Mediterranean commerce may well be incorporated in this part of the communication.

You will observe a paragraph I have framed contemplates a full future communication of our situation with France. At present it seems to me that this will be effected in the following mode.

Let a full reply to Mr. Adet's last communication be made, containing a particular review of our conduct and motives from the commencement of the Revolution. Let this be sent to Mr. Pinckney, to be imparted to the Directory; and let a copy of it, with a short auxiliary statement of facts, if necessary, be sent to the House of Representatives. As Mr. Adet has suspended his functions, I presume no reply can be made to him; but, not having seen his paper, I cannot judge.

The crisis is immensely important to the glory of the President, and to the honor and interest of the country.

It is all-important that the reply to Adet's last communication,

to whomsoever made, should be managed with the utmost possible prudence and skill, so that it may be a solid justification—an inoffensive remonstrance—the expression of a dignified seriousness—reluctant to quarrel, but resolved not to be humbled. The subject excites the greatest anxiety.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully and affectionately, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, November 21st, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

Having written to you on Saturday, the 11th instant (accompanying it with inclosures), without hearing any thing from you in the course of last week, or by the mail of this day, I begin to have uneasy sensations for the fate of my letter. To this cause, and to my solicitude to have the papers returned, you must ascribe the trouble of receiving this letter.

If my last got safe to your hand, and indisposition, business, or any other cause should have prevented your looking into the papers; I wish, even under these circumstances, that they may be returned to me immediately; for I have no copies, and have but little time to digest, and to put the several matters therein contained into form, that the whole may be revised again and again before it is presented—among these papers do not forget to place Sir John Sinclair's letter to me, as I am desirous of giving it an acknowledgment.

You will perceive by the publication of Mr. Adet's letter to Colonel Pickering (in Claypool's Gazette of this date), that the French government are disposed to play a high game. If other proofs were wanting, the *time* and *indelicate mode and style* of the present attack on the Executive, exhibited in this labored performance, which is as unjust as it is voluminous, would leave no

doubt as to the primary object it had in view; but what consequences it may ultimately produce is not so accessible to human foresight, as it may depend upon various contingencies and events. I have not seen the writer since my return to this city —nor is it presumable I shall do it under present circumstances, unless courted on my part.

The letter of Mr. Adet having been committed to the keeping of Mr. Bache, by him—extracts having already been given to the public—and other parts promised to be eked out (as would it is presumed, subserve the purposes in view), induced an opinion that it was best to give the ENTIRE letter to the public from authority, and without delay, that the well-informed part of the community might judge for themselves.

The necessity for bringing the matter fully before Congress is now rendered indispensable; and through that medium it is presumed it will make its way to the public with proper explanations.

I am, as you know me to be always and sincerely,

Your affectionate

GEO. WASHINGTON.

P. S.—Since writing the above, your letter of the 19th, with its inclosures, have been sent to me—accept my thanks for them. On account of the other matter contained in this letter I forward it—being written. Your sentiments in this interesting crisis will always be thankfully received.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

November 22d, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your note, sending me *Adet's* letter. The present is, in my opinion, as critical a situation as our government has been in; requiring all its prudence, all its wisdom, all its moderation, all its firmness.

Though the thing is now passed, I do not think it useless to say to you, that I was not well pleased with the Secretary of State's answer to Adet's note communicating the order respecting neutral vessels. There was something of hardness, and epigrammatic sharpness in it. Neither did I think the position true, that France had no right to inquire respecting the affair of seamen. I am of opinion, that whenever a neutral power suffers liberties to be taken with it, by a belligerent one, which turns to the detriment of the other belligerent party, *as the acquiring strength by impressing our seamen*, there is a good ground of inquiry, demanding candid explanation.

My opinion is, that our communications should be *calm, reasoning*, and serious, showing steady resolution more than feeling, having force in the idea rather than in the expression.

I am very anxious that our government should do right on the present occasion.

My ideas are these:

As *Adet* has declared his functions suspended, the reply ought not to be to him, but, through Mr. Pinckney, to the Directory.

It ought to contain a review of our conduct from the beginning; noticing our first and full acknowledgment of the Republic, and the danger we run by it. Also the dangers we incurred by other large interpretations of the treaty, in favor of France, adverting to the sale of prizes.

It should meet all the suggestions of the minister, correct his misstatements of facts, and meet, argumentatively, his principles. Where arguments, already used, are repeated, it ought to be in a new language, or by quotations in the body of the reply; not by reference to other communications annexed, or otherwise, which embarrass the reading and attention.

It should review, calmly, the conduct of France and her agents; pointing out, fully and clearly, the violations of our rights, and the spirit which was manifested; but in terms the most cautious and inoffensive.

It should advert to the policy of moderation towards the enemies of France, which our situation and that of France, especially as to maritime power, imposed upon us.

It should briefly recapitulate the means of obtaining redress from Great Britain, employed by our government, and the effects they have produced.

It should explain why the government could not safely adopt more *expeditious* modes, why the Executive could not control the Judiciary, and should show, that, in effect, the opposite party, as well as France, suffered the inconveniences of delay.

It should make prominent the consequences upon the peace and friendship of governments, if all accidental infractions from situation, from the negligences, &c., of particular officers, are to be imputed, with severity, to the government itself, and should apply the remark to the case of the injuries we have suffered, in different ways, from the officers and agents of France.

It should make prominent two ideas:—The situation in which we were with Great Britain, prior to the last treaty, so as to show, that, by the *laws* of nations, as *admitted* to us, and *declared* to France and the world, prior to that treaty, all the things complained of, as resulting from that treaty, previously existed. And it should dwell on the exception, in that treaty, of prior treaties.

It should point out strongly, the idea that the inconvenience at particular junctures of particular stipulations, is no reason for one party superseding them; but should intimate, that the President is willing to review the *relations* between the two countries; and, by a new treaty, if the same shall be approved by the Senate, to readjust the terms of those *relations*.

The article in the treaty with France, respecting an admission of the same privileges which are granted to other powers, should be examined. This plainly means where there is any *concession* of a positive privilege, which the United States were free to refuse; not where there is a mere recognition of the principles of the laws of nations.

It should be made prominent, that the United States have always wished, and still wish, to cultivate the most amicable relations; and are still disposed to evince this disposition, by every method in their power; that in what they have said, they mean only to show, that they have acted with sincerity and good faith;

and have rather received than given cause to complain; that they have been disposed to make a candid construction of circumstances which might seem inconsistent, with a friendly conduct in France; and claim a similar candor, in the estimate of their situation and conduct.

There should be an animadversion upon the unfitness of looking beyond the government to the citizens.

And there should be these ideas, properly couched: that the United States cannot admit, that a just cause of resentment has been given; that they appeal from the misapprehension which dictated this sentiment, to the justice and magnanimity of France, for a retraction of it, and for meeting them freely in the complete restoration of a friendly intercourse; that France will not deliberately expect, that they could make a sacrifice of self-respect, since she must be sensible, that a free people ought, in every event, to cherish it as a sacred duty, and to encounter, with firmness, every danger and calamity which an attempt to make them forget it, or degrade them from their independent character, may involve.

This would be the general complexion of the reply which I would give. The manner should be extremely cautious, smooth, even friendly, but yet solemn and dignified.

Yours,
A. H.

The alliance, in its future operation, must be against our interest. The door to escape from it is opened. Though we ought to maintain with good faith our engagements, if the conduct of the other party releases us, we should not refuse the release, so far as we may accept without compromitting our peace. This idea is very important.

KING TO HAMILTON.

London, November 30th, 1796.

My Dear Sir:

The archduke having expelled Jourdan and Moreau from Germany, the parties are in respect to territory in that quarter where they were when the campaign began. Bonaparte, by the latest accounts from Italy, is critically circumstanced, and it seems not improbable, that he likewise will be compelled to retire from Lombardy. The mission of Lord Malmesbury remains undecided, and though the negotiation is not promising, it does not appear as desperate as it did a fortnight ago. Paper has entirely ceased as a medium in France; what their ability is to prosecute another campaign, you, as well as I can, may conjecture. New projects are to be brought forward in this country, and if for no other reason than that they are novelties, they will be hazardous, where the force of habit is stronger than that of reason. The minister's plan is not definitively settled; but enough is known to authorize a belief that it cannot be approved by the moneyed men. The 3 per cents are at about 56 per ct. The minister is unwilling to augment the debt, already enormous, by borrowing on such terms. He intends proposing a loan, which is to be advanced by *patriotic* capitalists, upon terms more advantageous to the government. What patriotism may do, I cannot say; but unless there exists a real conviction in the minds of wealthy men, that their wealth is in danger, I should suspect that this virtue, pure and dignified as it is, will in this country prove an unproductive source when millions are required. It is time to make peace; for all sides are weary with the war. We most sincerely desire it, since peace alone will afford us the tranquillity we wish, and ought to enjoy.

I do not think it prudent to write my opinions, so far as I have formed them, concerning certain subjects interesting to our rights, and respecting which you will naturally wish for information from this quarter. The casualties to which letters are liable require a caution that between friends is unpleasant, and some-

times inconvenient. You know my opinion respecting this country. We have often endeavored to explain appearances that we disliked, and preserve our respect for a nation who have done much to improve the condition and happiness of mankind. I still hope that I have not been deceived, and that experience will prove that the opinions of those from whom we differed were, as we believed them, partial and erroneous.

We are anxious to hear the result of the Presidential election —much, very much will depend upon that event.

Farewell; yours very sincerely, &c.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

December 6, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The president of the Bank of New-York called upon me yesterday, and manifested considerable anxiety about the state of the bank. It seems the course of things lately, and their large accommodations to the government, have produced a balance against them in favor of the office of discount at this place, which has lately called for $100,000 in specie, and it is apprehended may speedily call for more.

The president mentioned this situation generally, with only this view, to show that the bank would probably be under the necessity of selling the stock pledged with them, if the government should not be punctual. It was at the same time declared that nothing but necessity would lead to any measure inconvenient to the government, yet it was thought advisable to admonish of the probable necessity.

A director, two or three days since, also mentioned to me that there was a sum of about 26,000 dollars of interest due to the bank, of which an account had been rendered, but which was not paid; adding, that in the present situation every little would help. Observations like these are of course confidential.

But the situation requires, and will make it good policy that, if in your power, you should come to the aid of the Bank of New-York. It would be wise, if possible, to anticipate a particular payment. It will be also useful to arrest for a time too free calls from the office.

Friendly attention and good offices on your part will inspire confidence, and embolden the bank to assist in future emergencies, and it is very much the policy of the Treasury not to be exclusively dependent on one institution.

P. S. Let me hear from you on this subject. What is doing with Adet?

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

December 8, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The President will lay the correspondence with France, since Genet's time, before Congress. A letter is preparing by Col. Pickering to Mr. Pinckney, in answer to Adet.

Tom Paine has published a book against the President, containing the most infamous calumnies. It is a systematic measure of France to destroy the public confidence in the friends of government, or "*Washington faction.*" The question whether our commerce is or is not to be attacked, depends entirely on the military operations in Germany and Italy.

HIGGINSON TO HAMILTON.

BOSTON, Dec. 9th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of 28th of last month I received, and communicated its contents to some of our electors; a majority of them

were at first inclined to throw away their votes from Mr. Pinckney, lest he should rise above Adams, but your information as to Vermont, with some observations made to them, showing the danger of so doing, decided all but three, who were determined, upon interested and personal motives, to waste theirs. Several hours were spent in discussion before they voted; the result was—16 for Adams, 13 for Pinckney, 2 for Governor Johnston, and 1 for Mr. Elsworth. Several of Adams's particular friends were very busy to induce those three to stand firm; they are extremely alarmed for his safety, and not without reason, if the other N. E. States have been united for Adams and Pinckney; as I expect, the latter will probably get sufficient separate votes in the Middle and Southern States to bring him in, and if Jefferson's friends shall have despaired of his election before the day, they may give many votes to Pinckney to exclude Adams, in which case he may have a large majority. What then is to be done? Mr. Adams, and many of his friends, will be very clamorous. They will swear the union of Pinckney with him was a trick to prevent his election, and many of us here shall never again be upon terms with him. He will never forgive our not being willing to hazard all to serve him. His disposition will not brook the disappointment; and he may be hurried by his temper to break with every one who preferred the public to him.

Should he fail, which I expect, some attempts should be made to conciliate and appease him, or serious inconveniences may result. It may be well for you and Governor Jay, with the President, &c., to contemplate the event, and arrange for it.

Your Judge Smith sent letters to some of our electors, and, I believe, to New Hampshire, soliciting votes for Burr very strongly, and rather pressing for Jefferson. Mr. Holton received one from him, and I believe Mr. Gerry also; but Holton was so circumstanced, he could make no attempts in favor of Burr, who will not have one vote I presume in N. E.

We have yet no accounts from New Hampshire, Rhode Island, or Connecticut.

Should Pinckney be elected, care must be taken early to

guard him against Adet, &c., who have strong hopes, I know, of attaching him to their views and party. This will remain with you in the Middle States to effect.

HAMILTON TO KING.

New-York, December 16, 1796.

I have received, my dear sir, your several letters of the 25th of August, 10th and 11th of September. You know my sentiments towards you too well, to ascribe my delay in answering them to any other cause than the imperiousness of avocations with which I could not dispense.

Public opinion, taking the country at large, has continued, since you left us, to travel on in a right direction, and, I trust, will not easily deviate from it. You will have seen, before this reaches you, Mr. Adet's communications. We conjecture, as to the timing of them, that they were intended to influence the election of President by the apprehension of war with France. We suppose also they are designed in the same way to give support to the partisans of France, and that they have for eventual object, the placing things in just such a state as will leave France at liberty to slide easily either into a renewal of cordiality, or an actual or virtual war with the United States. If the war of Europe continues, the efforts of France will be likely to be levelled, as a primary object, against the commerce and credit of Great Britain, and to injure these she may think it advisable to make war upon our trade; forgetting perhaps that the consequence may be, to turn it more entirely into the channels of Great Britain. These reflections will be obvious to you. I only make them, to apprise you of the view which is taken of the subject here. Thus far, appearances do not indicate that the purpose of influencing the country has been obtained. I think, in the main, the effect has been to impress the necessity of adhering more firmly to the government.

You need not be told that every exertion, not degrading to us, will be made to preserve peace with France. Many of the opposite party, however they may be pleased with appearances of ill-humor in France, will not wish it to go to the length of war. And we shall endeavor to avoid it, in pursuance of our general plan of preserving peace with all the world. Yet you may depend that we shall not submit to be dictated to, or to be forced into a departure from our plan of neutrality, unless to repel an attack upon us.

Our anxiety has been extreme on the subject of the election for President. If we may trust our information, which we have every reason to trust, it is now decided that neither Jefferson nor Burr can be President. It must be either Adams or Pinckney, the first most probably. By the throwing away of votes in New-England, lest Pinckney should outrun Adams, it is not unlikely that Jefferson will be Vice-President. The event will not a little mortify Burr. Virginia has given him only one vote.

It was expected of course that the Senate's answer to the President would be flattering to him. But the speech in the House of Representatives has been better than was expected. An address, which I have not seen, but stated by our friends to be a very good one, has passed the House with only twelve dissenting, consisting of the most fiery spirits. The address is not only generally complimentary to the President, but includes, it is said, an *explicit approbation of his administration*, which caused the division. Edward Livingston is in the minority.

After giving you these consolatory accounts, I am now to dash the cup a little, by telling you that Livingston is in all probability re-elected in this city. The principal cause has been an unacceptable candidate on our part, *James Watson*. There were four gentlemen who would certainly have succeeded, but none of them would accept. In Watson we could not unite opinions. He was more disagreeable than I had supposed to a large body of our friends, and yet, after the declining of the persons alluded to, we could not do otherwise than support him. For he had gotten a strong hold upon most of the leading mechanics who act with us.

But in the State at large we shall better our representation, and I hope for a majority in the House of Representatives. As an omen of this, there are several new members in Congress from different States, who hitherto vote with our friends.

The favorable change in the conduct of Great Britain towards us, strengthens the hands of the friends of order and peace. It is much to be desired that a treatment in all respects unexception able from that quarter, should obviate all pretext to inflame the public mind.

We are laboring hard to establish in this country principles more and more *national*, and free from all foreign ingredients, so that we may be neither "Greeks nor Trojans," but truly Americans.

HAMILTON TO WM. SMITH.

1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your letter of the —. Though I do not like in some respects the answer of the House to the speech, yet I frankly own that I had no objection to see it softened down. For I think there is no use in *hard words*—and in public proceedings would almost always unite the *suaviter in modo*, with the *fortiter in re*.

But I must regret that there is no prospect of the *fortiter in re*. I perceive clearly that your measures will wear upon the whole the aspect of *resentment*, without means or energy sufficient to repel injury. Our country will be first ruined, and then we shall begin to think of defending ourselves.

I will not enter much into detail, but I will observe that instead of three frigates of 32, I would prefer an increase of the number of cutters. Surely twenty of these cannot embarrass the most squeamish, and less than this number will be useless.

But from all I can see you will have no revenue. Overdriven theory every where palsies the operations of our government, and renders all rational *practice* impossible.

My ideas of revenue would be:

A tax on buildings	$1,000,000
Stamp tax, including perfumeries—a per centage on policies of insurance—on collateral successions to real and personal estate—on *hats*—say . .	500,000
5 cents for the worst, 10 for the middling, and 20 for the best saddle horses	150,000
Salt, so as to make the whole 25 per cent. . .	350,000
	$2,000,000

I have explained my ideas of the house tax to Wolcott and Sedgwick.

It is to take certain *criteria* of different buildings, and annex to them *ratios*, not *rates*. (What I gave to Sedgwick as *rates* may serve as *ratios*.) Then apportion the tax among the States, and distribute the quota of each among the individuals according to ratios. The aggregate of the ratios will represent the quota of the State—then, as that aggregate is to the sum of the quota, so will *be the sum of the ratios* of each building to the tax to be paid by each individual.

I am told an objection will arise from the negro houses in the South. Surely there is no impracticability in annexing *ratios* to them which will be proportional to their taxable value. This plan will avoid the worst of all inconveniences—the arbitrary of valuations; and will avoid the embarrassment for the present of a land tax, will be also consistent with expedition. I entertain no doubt it can be adjusted so as to be free from any material objection. The smallness of the tax will render any material inequality impossible. You cannot compute fewer than 600,000 houses, which at an average would be about a dollar and a half a house. The proportions of the better houses on the proposed plan would make the tax fall light on the inferior and country houses, which is desirable for recommending the first essay, nor would any house I am persuaded have to pay ten dollars. What room for serious objection? You then lay a foundation for an annual million on real property, which will become a permanent accession to your revenue. Whereas you will feel an endless embarrassment about agreeing upon any tax on lands.

HIGGINSON TO HAMILTON.

BOSTON, January 12th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 20th of last month, I have received. The election of Mr. Adams seems to be secured with an excess only of one vote, which is close work indeed. This, while it avoids the point I before stated to you, will involve another, I fear, more dangerous and difficult. The blind or devoted partisans of Mr. Adams, instead of being satisfied with his being elected, seem to be alarmed at the danger he was in of failing; and they have the folly to say, that this danger was incurred wholly by the arrangement of pushing him and Pinckney together. They go farther and say, that this arrangement was intended to bring in Pinckney and exclude him. They affect to believe this to have been the intention, because the character of Adams for discernment and independence forbid all hope of influencing the decisions of the Executive, he being the President; but had Pinckney been introduced, his pliability would have continued the influence of a few over the measures of the Executive, which has been too conspicuous during the present administration. At the head of this junto, as they call it, they place you and Mr. Jay, and they attribute the design to him and you of excluding Mr. Adams from the chair, which the arrangement alluded to was intended to effect. They affect also to believe that it is for the interest of the country to have Mr. Jefferson for Vice-President rather than Pinckney; that he will serve readily under Mr. Adams, and will be influenced by and coincide with him.

These sentiments, however foolish and impudent they may appear, are dealt out freely by some of his particular connections, who seem to consider the country as made for the man, and not the man for the country; and it is believed, that Mr. Adams himself entertains them, perhaps has communicated them. Those who know the man, will not be much surprised if he should himself say the same things when his feelings are up; and it may happen, that believing thus, he may be cool and dis-

tant towards those whom he ought to be intimate with and consult upon important occasions. With such impressions he may attach himself to Jefferson, if he conducts with address and adopts a line of conduct toward his former friends, which will divide, and may much weaken the federal interest.

I suggest to you this much, perhaps not new, with a view to prepare you for appearances, which might otherwise alarm some of our friends who may not expect them; possibly you may think of some mode of preventing the inconveniences which I fear to result from what I apprehend to be Mr. Adams's feelings.

HAMILTON TO WM. SMITH.

January 19th, 1797.

My Dear Sir:

Mrs. De Neufville, widow of Mr. De Neufville, formerly of Holland, is on her way to Philadelphia to solicit the kindness of Congress in virtue of services rendered the American cause by her husband. You probably know their history, as South Carolina was particularly concerned. From what I have heard, it seems to me her pretensions, on the score of her husband, to the kindness of this country, are strong; as a distressed and amiable woman, she has a claim to every body's kindness.

What are you about in Congress? Our affairs seem to be at a very critical point with France. We seem to be brought to the same point with her as we were with Great Britain when Mr. Jay was sent there. One last effort of negotiation to produce accommodation and redress, or measures of self-defence. Have you any thoughts of an embargo? There may be ere long a necessity for it. Are you in earnest about the additional revenue? this is very necessary.

Yours truly, &c.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

January 20, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I received your late letter in due time. You seem to be of opinion to defer to a future period the commencement of direct taxation. I acknowledge I am inclined to lay gently hold of it now. Leaders of the opposite party favor it now, perhaps, with no good design. But it will be well to take them while in the humor, and make them share the responsibility. This will be the more easy as they are inclined to take the lead. Our external affairs are so situated, that it seems to me indispensable to open new springs of revenue, and press forward our little naval preparation, and be ready for augmenting it. But, on the whole, I have always leaned to the opinion that *half a million* from direct taxes, was enough to begin with, nor should I have proposed more.

What are we to do with regard to our good allies? Are we to leave our commerce a free prey to them? I hope not. It seems to me we are even beyond the point at which we were with Great Britain when Mr. Jay was sent thither, and that something like a similar plan ought to be pursued; that is, we ought to make a final effort to accommodate, and then resort to measures of defence. I believe *ere long* an embargo on *our own vessels* will be advisable—to last till the conduct of France changes, or till it is ascertained it will not change. In the last event, the following system may be adopted:—to grant special letters of *marque*, with authority to repel aggressors and capture *assailants;* to equip our frigates; to arm a number of *sloops of war* of existing vessels to convoy our merchantmen. This may be a middle term to general hostility, though it may slide into the latter. Yet, in this case, it may be well to let France make the progress. But at all events we must protect our commerce and save our honor.

As to the balance business, the agitation of the question has been every way unfortunate. There is not an *individual* in the State of New-York who is not profoundly convinced that the

settlement was *wholly artificial*, and as it regarded the rule of quotaing manifestly unjust, and consequently, that there is no justice in paying it. I never saw but one mode of getting through the business, which is for Congress to call for a certain sum of each debtor State annually, say a *fiftieth* part, declaring that if not paid, each instalment shall bear interest from the time it becomes due, but till then the principal to carry no interest. I believe the State for harmony's sake would yield to such an arrangement. It may be said this will be only a nominal payment. I answer true, but an *artificial balance* ought only to be nominally paid. The conduct of some gentlemen in the late question, has pained me much. It is inconsistent with a tacit pledge of faith. Every New-Yorker who had any thing to do with our fiscal arrangements has been personally compromised.

Yours truly.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

January 22d, 1797.

SIR:

The sitting of the court and an uncommon pressure of business have unavoidably delayed an answer to your last favor. I have read with attention Mr. Pickering's letter. It is, in the main, a substantial and satisfactory paper—will, in all probability, do considerable good in enlightening public opinion at home; and I do not know that it contains any thing which will do harm elsewhere. It wants, however, in various parts, that management of expression and *suaviter in modo* which a man more used to diplomatic communication could have given it, and which would have been happy if united with its other merits.

I have reflected as maturely as time has permitted on the idea of an extraordinary mission to France, and, notwithstanding the objections, I rather incline to it under some shape or other. As an imitation of what was done in the case of Great Britain, it will argue to the people equal solicitude. To France it will have

a similar aspect (for Pinckney will be considered there as a mere substitute in ordinary course to Mr. Monroe), and will in some degree soothe her pride. The influence on party, if a man in whom the opposition has confidence is sent, will be considerable, in the event of non-success; and it will be to France a bridge over which she may more easily retreat.

The best form of the thing, in my view, is a commission including three persons, who may be called commissioners plenipotentiary and extraordinary. Two of the three should be Mr. Madison and Mr. Pinckney; a third may be taken from the northern States, and I know of none better than Mr. Cabot; who, or any *two* of whom, may be empowered to act.

Mr. Madison will have the confidence of the French and of the opposition. Mr. Pinckney will have something of the same advantage in an inferior degree. Mr. Cabot, without being able to prevent their doing what is right, will be a salutary check upon too much Gallicism, and his real commercial knowledge will supply their want of it. Besides that, he will enjoy the confidence of all the friends of the administration. His disposition to preserve peace is ardent and unqualified.

This plan, too, I think, will consist with all reasonable attention to Mr. Pinckney's feelings.

Or (which, however, I think less eligible) Mr. Madison and Mr. Pinckney only may be joint commissioners, without a third person.

Mr. Cabot, if appointed without being consulted, will, I think, certainly go. If not, the other two may act without him.

The power to the commissioners will be, to adjust amicably mutual compensations, and the compensations which may be due by either party; and to revise and remodify the political and commercial relations of the two countries.

In the exercise of their power, they must be restrained by precise instructions to do nothing inconsistent with our other existing treaties, or with the principles of construction of those with France adopted by our executive government, as declared in its public acts and communications; and nothing to extend our *political* relations in respect to alliance, but to endeavor to get rid

of the mutual guarantee in the treaty, or, if that shall be impracticable, to stipulate *specific succors* in lieu of it, as so many troops, so many ships, so much money, &c.; strictly confining the *casus fœderis to future defensive wars*, after a general and complete pacification terminating the present war; and defining offensive war to be, where there is either a full declaration of war against the ally, or first commission of actual hostility on the territory or property of the ally by invasion or capture. As to commerce, with the above restrictions, there may be full discretion. These are merely inaccurate outlines.

Unless Mr. Madison will go, there is scarcely another character that will afford advantage.

Cogent motives of public utility must prevail over personal considerations. Mr. Pinckney may be told, in a private letter from you, that this is an unavoidable concession to the pressure of public exigency and the state of internal parties.

With true respect and affectionate attachment,

I have the honor to be, &c.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 22d January, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 19th inst. was received yesterday. From the general impression on my mind relative to M. de Neuville's claim on the justice of this country, a delay or a refusal to administer it would be hard; but I must add that I am too little acquainted with the particulars to form a correct opinion, and were it otherwise, I do not see how I could, with propriety, appear directly or indirectly in the business, as I do not recollect having had any agency therein. The numberless applications of this sort which are made to me (often in the *dernier ressort*,) without the means of relief, are very distressing to my feelings.

The conduct of France towards the United States is, accord-

ing to my ideas of it, outrageous beyond conception:—not to be warranted by her treaties with us; by the law of nations; by any principle of justice; or even by a regard to decent appearances.

From considerations such as these something might have been expected; but on her professions of friendship and loving-kindness towards us I built no hope; but rather supposed they would last as long and no longer than it would accord with their interest to bestow them; or found it would not divert us from the observance of that strict neutrality which we had adopted and were persevering in.

In a few days there will be published a statement of facts in a letter, with reference to General Pinckney; containing full answers to all the charges exhibited in Mr. Adet's notes, against the conduct of this government. After reading them with attention I will thank you for your sentiments thereon, fully and frankly communicated; and what you think ought further to be attempted to preserve this country in peace, consistently with the respect which is due to ourselves?

In some of the gazettes, and in conversation also, it is suggested that an envoy extraordinary ought to be sent to France; but is not General Pinckney gone there already for the express purpose of explaining matters, and removing inquietudes? With what more could another be charged? What would that gentleman *think* of having a person treading on his heels by the time he had arrived in Paris, when the arguments used to induce him to go there are all that could be urged to influence the other?—and where is the character to be had—admitting the necessity—in all respects acceptable and qualified for such a trust?

The sooner you can give me your sentiments on these queries, the more pleasing they will be to

Dear sir, your sincere, affectionate

GEO. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

Jan. 23d, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I remember that very early in the day, and prior to any act of Great Britain, the French passed a decree violating, with regard to all the neutral powers, the principle of *free ships, free goods*, and I think making provisions liable to seizure. This decree was afterwards rescinded as to America—then again revived, and then again revoked. I want copies of these decrees for a particular purpose useful to the government, and presuming they must be on the files of your department, you will oblige me much by letting me have copies as speedily as may be convenient.

With respect and true esteem, &c.

AMES TO HAMILTON.

(IN CONFIDENCE.)

PHILADELPHIA, January 26, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

My last was written hastily and under some impressions of the moment which I had not time to unfold. The close, respecting your taking a seat in the next house (to be elected), would pass for an awkward compliment, if you did not know me (and yourself) too well for such an interpretation.

You desire an inside view of our stage, I begin with the *outside*. Our relations with France are serious. All the French party seem to expect and desire an extra envoy, which is an objection—as probably they hope thus to soothe the resentments so tardily roused against France, to exhibit a show of supplication on our part, and to ground some new delusive connection on the adjustment of existing complaints. On the other hand, it would be a literal and exact adherence to the late precedent in regard to

Great Britain; it might afford a pretext for the French to relax; and in case they should not, animate and unite opinions for the necessary result. But as Mr. Pinckney is gone instructed on this very subject, the course adopted is, I believe, to rely on his mission and to *send* an extra envoy. I wish you would direct your most mature thoughts to the subject, and if you should not approve the negative, you ought (permit me to say) choose your own way of bringing your sentiments into consideration in the proper place. Should it not be an object to negotiate an abrogation of the clause which guarantees the West India possessions to France? However vague it may be, and valid or urgent as our excuses might seem, the clause would embarrass government and furnish a text for partisans to raise clamors in case of a future war (the United States being at peace), and our noncompliance with a demand for its execution.

More taxes are necessary; and when trade is so much disturbed by war, and will be not much less affected by peace, land taxes seem to be the only safe resource. But my creed is, that three things ought first to concur—to systematize and perfect the collection of our internal revenues; to extend them to the most eligible and productive new objects; and to prepare the public mind for the tax on lands, only to the amount of the deficiency. Neither of these has been effected. The dread of the latter is at the same time the best means of getting more indirect taxes, and of conciliating the people to a land tax. It is necessity, the perception of which will produce salutary efforts in the first instance, and a reasonable acquiescence in the next. A tax on salt is a good one, but it would be hard to carry through; and its foes would combine with some of its advocates to refuse the drawback on salted fish, called a bounty—which is not to be admitted. Snuff is condemned, as vexatious and trivial; that on auctions as bad in principle. The license tax, extended to taverns, and so arranged as in part to augment with the sales of the retailer, would be productive. To effect this last idea, how would it answer to rate licenses for three gallons very low; for more, and under twenty, still higher? If a separate license by the same dealer for Madeira, Sherry, and Port, still higher for each, as he

must be a dealer of capital? To abolish the distinction in favor of home-made spirits, and to levy it on the sales of all spirits and wines? Equality would not be produced, but inequality, as it now exists, would be somewhat diminished.

The public should also see a plan or mode of levying a direct tax pass into a law. The vote for the actual levy of a tax to be suspended till the next session, and then to be for the deficiency. The moderation of the tax would, on experiment, destroy and disappoint the prejudices against it; and the preparation of opinions would be the best possible. The aversion would seem to have resisted, delayed, and diminished the evil to the utmost.

The anti gents make their calculations, no doubt, that a direct tax will sharpen popular feelings—augment clamors against the debt, bank, &c.,—enfeeble and discredit the other species of revenue, especially internal—perhaps they expect favoritism in the assessments.

Our proceedings smell of anarchy. We rest our hopes on foolish and fanatical grounds—on the superior morals and self-supporting theories of our age and country; on human nature being different from what it is, and better here than any where else. We cannot think it possible our government should stop, or that there is the least occasion to provide the means for it to go on. Internal revenues demand system and vigor. The collection must be watched and enforced. We want officers, courts, habits of acquiescence in our country, and the principles in Congress that would begin to form any of these. The western country scarcely calls itself dependent on the Union. France is ready to hold Louisiana. The thread of connection is slender, and that event, I fear, would break it. Yet we disband regiments.

Our trade has spoliations to endure from France and Great Britain, yet we are not willing to abandon or protect it as others do, by a naval force. An European would be ready to believe we were in jest in our politics, or, that newspaper declamation, and the frothy nonsense of town-meeting speeches, comprise the principles of our conduct. For I am obliged to observe, even good men adopt errors or pursue truth with a spirit not much more friendly to order and stability in government, than their adver-

saries. Who, for instance, can think without alarm on the frequency and seductive nature of the disgraceful sequestration and anti-credit motions in the House? Facts of this vile nature do not occur in other countries, or, if they do, they precede and create convulsion. Here they are received as civilly as if infamy did not form an atmosphere about them, contaminating all who breathe in it. We are formed but of late for independent sovereignty. Experience has not laid on her lessons with birch, and we forget them. Our whole system is little removed from simple democracy. What we call *the government* is a phantom, as long as the democrats prevail in the House. The heads of departments are head clerks. Instead of being the ministry, the organs of the executive power, and imparting a kind of momentum to the operation of the laws, they are precluded of late even from communicating with the House, by reports. In other countries, they may speak as well as act. We allow them to do neither. We forbid even the use of a speaking-trumpet; or, more properly, as the Constitution has ordained that they shall be dumb, we forbid them to explain themselves by signs. Two evils, obvious to you, result from all this. The efficiency of the government is reduced to its minimum—the proneness of a popular body to usurpation is already advancing to its maximum; committees already are the ministers; and while the House indulges a jealousy of encroachment on its functions, which are properly deliberative, it does not perceive that these are impaired and nullified by the monopoly as well as the perversion of information, by these very committees. The silly reliance of our coffee-house and Congress prattlers on the responsibility of members to the people, &c., &c., is disgraced by every page of the history of popular bodies. We expect, confidently, that the House of Representatives will *act* out of its proper character—for if it should act according to it, we are lost.

Our government will be, in fact, a mere democracy, which has never been tolerable nor long tolerated.

Our proceedings evince the truth of these speculative opinions. No one was furnished with proper information. Nobody was answerable for what he presumed to give.

The committee of ways and means has not, I am told, written a page these two years. It collects the scraps and fritters of facts at the Treasury, draws crude hasty results tinctured with localities. These are not suppported by any formed plan of co-operation with the members, and the report calls forth the pride of all the motion-makers. Every subject is suggested in debate, every popular ground of apprehension is invaded. There is nothing to enlighten the House or to guide the public opinion. All this has happened. I am now preaching daily to those few who will hear me rail, and endeavoring to form a common sentiment; that something must be done—that it must begin and be approved at the *Treasury*—that the Antis will exult in our shame, if we forbear to arrange an efficient plan, &c. This is in train, not very far advanced, nor with good omens. It is as to our projected combination, you will perceive, strictly a *secret* My own wishes are to extend our indirect taxes and to pass a bill prescribing the mode of levying a land tax, holding up the idea in debate at the time of a small amount only. But the apathy and inefficiency of our body is no secret to you. We are generally in a flat calm, and when we are not we are near sinking in a tempest. When a sovereign convention engrosses the whole power, it will do nothing or some violence that is worse. Sooner or later individuals and public bodies will act out their principles; ours are, I fear, essentially more democratic than republican, which latter are alone fit for our country. We think the executive power is a mere pageant of the representative body—a custos rotulorum, or master of ceremonies. We ourselves are but passive instruments, whenever the sovereign people choose to speak for themselves, instead of our speaking for them.

The momentum imparted to our political machine is weak and the resistance strong. Faction appears of course in such a state of things. This I confess naturally excites a counter influence, but the power even of party seems to be dissipated. We are broken to pieces. Some able man of the first order of abilities, and possessing the rare union of qualities that will fit him to head a party, is wanting. For want of such a leader, many

who would do good, are useless. My natural temperament unfits me for a seat where I cannot bear to sit quite inactive. Although such efforts as I can make will be unavailing.

No session of Congress has exhibited such a dissipation of the party which has been arrayed in support of the government; this will be some excuse for my forebodings of the decline of our affairs.

One might have hoped that government would find in party all the combination and energy that is excluded from its organization. I see, however, that this auxiliary, unless compacted together by the violent action of the rival party, will subdivide or fall into inaction; and even when roused to the utmost, it is in need of a clear-sighted guide.

As this is the state of our politics, what is to be done? The friends of the government have increased within two or three years in numbers and zeal; but few of them know or could be made to believe that its fair outside conceals such alarming weakness.

Your truly, &c.

FISHER AMES.

P. S. I understand bank shares have been lately attached by law process. This strikes my mind as a very anarchical proceeding.

Porcupine is a writer of smartness, and might do more good if directed by men of sense and experience. His ideas of an *intimate* connection with Great Britain justly offend correct thinkers, and still more the multitude. He proposes a new daily paper, a business much overdone. Its circulation out of the city will not be great. Would not a paper once or twice a week, exclusively political, answer better? Please let Webster have the paragraph for his Minerva.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 30, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I am sorry to have so long delayed an answer to your letter of the 23d, but we have been universally occupied, and the decrees you referred to, were not readily found. That of the 28th of May, 1793, I have now discovered in a printed volume of the proceedings of the Convention for that month; so I now inclose you copies.

1st. Of the decree of May 9th, 1793, violating our treaty by rendering neutral vessels laden with provisions liable to capture, as well as enemy's property on board neutral vessels.

2d. Of the decree of 23d May, repealing the former in respect to American vessels.

3d. Of the decree of the 28th of May, reversing the last decree.

4th. Of the decree of July 1st, 1793, repealing that of the 28th May.

These appear to be all the decrees referred to in your letter, but there must have been a subsequent one, alike violating our treaty, which Mr. Monroe forbore to ask the repeal of; lest, as he said, the French government should demand a performance of this guarantee. Yet the many claims in behalf of American merchants, whose properties had been captured, were to be made on the principle, that the decree in question was a violation of our treaty. After this matter was pressed upon him by Randolph (as well as I recollect), he urged the repeal which was passed January 4th, 1795. If this decree, and that which it repeals, will be useful to you, copies shall be furnished.

It appears probable from the tenor of some of Gouverneur Morris's letters, that the decree of 9th May, and 28th of the same month, were passed (at least the latter) to answer the views of the captors of certain vessels taken before the 9th of May, and that of May 28th, specially to enable the captors to hold the ship Lawrence.

I am with great and sincere respect, &c.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

NEW-YORK, February 6, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I duly received your letter of the 23d of January, with its inclosure, for which I am much obliged to you. I have read it with great pleasure. It is a substantial, satisfactory paper; will do good in this country; and as to France, I presume events will govern there.

Is it not proper to call upon the merchants to furnish your department with statements and proofs of the spoliations which we have suffered from the French, as was done when the English were in their mischievous career?

Yours with true esteem, &c.

I received your other letter with certain inclosures.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

February 10th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

If I recollect right, Chancellor Livingston, while Secretary of Foreign Affairs, reported a censure upon our commissioners who made the peace with Great Britain, for not obeying their instructions with regard to France. Will you favor me in confidence with the real state of this business? I was at the time a member of Congress. It was immediately on the arrival of the provisional articles.

I hope, my dear sir, *effectual measures* are taking to bring us to some issue with France to ascertain whether her present plan is to be persisted in or abandoned. For, surely, our commerce ought not to be thus an undefended prey.

Yours truly, &c.

HAMILTON TO KING.

February 15th, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Give me leave to recall to your recollection and acquaintance Mr. De Galon the bearer of this, who, as he informs me, goes to Europe on private business. I need not observe that he is an interesting man, as you know all his titles to the attention which your situation permits you to afford.

You must not think I forget you, because I do not write (for this is only my third letter). I am overwhelmed in professional business, and have scarcely a moment for any thing else.

You will have learned the terrible depredations which the French have committed upon our trade in the West Indies on the declared principle of intercepting our whole trade with the ports of her enemies. This conduct is making the impression which might be expected, though not with that electric rapidity which would have attended similar treatment from another power. The present session of Congress is likely to be very unproductive. That body is in the situation which we foresaw certain *anti*-executive maxims would bring them to.

Mr. Adams is President, Mr. Jefferson Vice-President. Our Jacobins say, they are well pleased, and that the *lion* and the *lamb* are to lie down together. Mr. Adams's PERSONAL friends talk a little in the same way. "Mr. Jefferson is not half so ill a man as we have been accustomed to think him. There is to be a united and a vigorous administration." Skeptics like me quietly look forward to the event, willing to hope, but not prepared to believe. If Mr. Adams has *vanity* 'tis plain a plot has been laid to take hold of it. We trust his real good sense and integrity will be a sufficient shield.

Yours affectionately, &c.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, Feb. 6th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 16th of December, and I need not express the satisfaction which the information that it contained afforded me. The probable termination of the election of President, the general temper of the country, and the effect likely to be produced by Mr. Adet's notes, are such as I had not only hoped but expected. If by prudence and firmness, which have hitherto kept us out of this extraordinary and desolating war, we shall be able to maintain the public peace and national honor, we shall not only increase our reputation as a wise people, but we shall moreover establish a precedent of inestimable worth for future times of trouble and embarrassment. Nothing can exceed the applause that is here given to our government, and no American who has not been in England can have a just idea of the admiration expressed among all parties of General Washington. It is a common observation, that he is not only the most illustrious, but also the most meritorious character that has hitherto appeared. The king is without doubt a very popular character among the people of this nation. It would be saying very much, to affirm that next to him General Washington is the most popular character among them; and yet I verily believe this to be the fact.

I mention these circumstances, not only because it will give you, as it has afforded me, much pleasure to hear them mentioned, but also because they show a more liberal manner of thinking and speaking respecting us, and a more rational estimate of our affairs, than formerly existed. Much credit is due to Mr. Jay on this score, who, we thought, would do honor and be of advantage to our country, but who has done much more than I could have imagined, had I not seen the clearest proofs of his success. He had great difficulties to encounter; he overcame many of them; some still exist, and when they will be surmounted I am unable to say. Time and patience are necessary

to form a satisfactory opinion how far we shall finally be able to agree. In the main, our affairs here are in a good train. The treaty, I think, will be fairly and fully executed. You remember the opinion given by certain gentlemen upon the construction of the seventh article of the treaty. We have experienced embarrassments on this subject, and for several weeks the business of the commissioners was entirely at a stand, the advocate of this government having denied the power to examine any questions that had been decided by the High Court of Appeals. The question was delicate; the pride, and, as it was alleged, the importance of men of rank and influence, were almost enlisted against our pretensions, and a little imprudence might have thrown the business into the worst possible situation. This did not happen. With moderation, caution, and a conciliatory mode of proceeding, these difficulties have been entirely removed, and all is now proceeding in a satisfactory manner. The result of several conferences has been, after the manifestation of much candor and fairness on the part of this government, a direction to the British commissioners to unite with ours, and to proceed to hear and decide every question that shall be brought before them according to the provisions of the treaty, which, it was added, it was the duty of the commissioners to consider and interpret. They have accordingly decided a case of considerable consequence, which is that of the Pattersons of Baltimore. A ship and cargo belonging to them had been captured and condemned in the West Indies. This sentence had been affirmed in the High Court of Appeals, and a memorial in behalf of Pattersons was preferred to the commissioners for compensation for their loss and damages. The commissioners have pronounced (Doctor Nicholl only dissenting of a full board) that they have jurisdiction of the cause, and that upon its merits the Pattersons are entitled to full and complete compensation for their loss and damages, to be paid according to the provisions of the treaty.

By letters received to day from Paris, I learn the unpleasant information, that Gen. Pinckney was on the 28th ult. ordered by the Directory to leave Paris, and that he intended to depart for Holland, where he will wait the orders of our government on the

31st. I cannot fully account for this step, after the irresolution that for some time has existed. Whether it is to be ascribed to information which has been thought sufficient to satisfy the Directory of the result of the election for President, or whether it is to be attributed to the late astonishing victories of Buonaparte, which have literally destroyed an army of 40,000 Austrians, I am uncertain; perhaps both have contributed to this extraordinary step.

Yours very sincerely,

RUFUS KING.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

February 26th, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

The present inimitable course of our public affairs proves me to be a very bad politician, so that I am afraid to suggest any idea that occurs to me. Yet I will give over my timidity and communicate for your consideration a reverie which has struck me.

It is a fact that the resentment of the French government is very much levelled at the actual President. A change of the person (however undesirable in other respects) may give a change to the passion, and may also furnish a bridge to retreat over. This is a great advantage to a new President, and the most ought to be made of it. For it is much our interest to preserve peace, if we can with honor, and if we cannot, it will be very important to prove that no endeavor to do it has been omitted.

Were I Mr. Adams, then I believe I should begin my Presidency by naming an extraordinary commission to the French republic, and I think it would consist of three persons: Mr. Madison, Mr. Pinckney, and Mr. Cabot. I should pursue this course for several reasons, because I would have a man as influential with the French as Mr. Madison; yet, I would not trust him alone, lest his Gallicism should work amiss,—because I would

not wound Mr. Pinckney, so recently sent in the same spirit; thirdly, I think Cabot would mix very useful ingredients in the cup.

The commission should be charged to make explanations—to remonstrate, to ask indemnification, and they should be empowered to make a new treaty of commerce not inconsistent with our other treaties, and perhaps to abrogate or remodify the treaty of alliance.

That treaty can only be inconvenient to us in future. The guarantee of our sovereignty and independence henceforth is nominal. The guarantee of the West India islands of France, as we advance in strength, will be more and more real. In future, and in a truly defensive war, I think we shall be bound to comply efficaciously with our guarantee. Nor have I been able to see that it means less than obligation to take part in such a war with our whole force. I have no ideas of treaties which are not executed.

Hence, I want to get rid of that treaty by mutual consent, or to liquidate its meaning to a treaty of *definite* succor—in a clearly defensive war; so many men, so many ships, so much money, and to be furnished by one ally to the other. This of course must be so managed as to exclude unequivocally the present war in all its possible mutations.

Such objects are important enough for *three*. In executive matters, I am as little fond as most people of plurality; but I think it pedantry to admit no exceptions to any general rule, and I believe, under the present circumstances of the case, a commission would be advisable. I give my dream of it as it occurred: you will do with it what you please.

Yours,

A. H.

KING TO HAMILTON.

March 8th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

On the 28th ult., the Bank of England stopped payment in specie, and since every bank in Great Britain has followed its example. The directors say that the bank is more than solvent, exclusive of their capital stock invested in the funds. Committees of the two houses of Parliament, which have examined the affairs of the bank, confirm by their report the declaration of the directors, and associations are forming throughout the kingdom to receive and circulate bank notes. Many whom I meet profess to believe that the bank will soon be able to resume their former course of payments. But I see so few of the causes (if they exist) which are to effect this restoration, that I am somewhat skeptical, and my want of faith is in some measure excused by circumstances that I think will for the present prevent the return of the golden age. No nation has supported a more perfect credit than England. None has been able to substitute in so great a degree paper in lieu of coin—and in no country, therefore, is the quantity of specie comparatively so small as in England. This fact was not practically believed. The bank has now proved it to the conviction and dismay of the country. Besides, Parliament have authorized the bank to issue notes under £5, and they have also repealed the laws prohibiting individuals from making and circulating their notes payable on demand for sums under £5. The consequence is, that the banks are throwing into circulation 20s. and 40s. notes, to supply the absence of guineas, and the manufactories and private bankers are likewise issuing to their workmen and customers, small bills of every denomination, which supply the absence of shillings and sixpenny pieces.

Farewell.

Yours sincerely.

P. S.—Since the capture of Mantua, the Austrians have notified this court of their resolution to prosecute the war—relying

on the co-operation of Great Britain. What effect the pecuniary state of England may have upon their disposition to persevere, I will not conjecture. Without moneys the Emperor will not be able to go on. Thus you see a very interesting subject brought within a narrow compass. France will harass and waste our commerce regardless of justice. She makes our treaty with England the pretence. Had we made no treaty her conduct would be the same. She has recently required of Hamburgh and Bremen to suspend and prohibit all commerce with England—and yet she has not succeeded in her views, though she has recalled her minister from Hamburgh. The demand has likewise been repeated at Copenhagen, and a refusal to comply has produced a diplomatic altercation, as pointed, perhaps, as that between Colonel Pickering and Mr. Adet.

Our affairs in the Mediterranean are settled or nearly so. Col. Humphries informs me that we stand well with Algiers. We have concluded a treaty of peace with Tripoli, and it is probable, shall soon make a similar treaty with Tunis. The Dey of Algiers having invaded the Tunissean territories—principally, says Col. Humphries, to compel the Bey to conclude a peace with the United States of America, for the accomplishment of which the Dey offers to advance the money from his own treasury, and engages to guarantee this treaty as he has done that with Tripoli.—Strange event.

SCHUYLER TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, March 19, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

I shall not fail to call the attention of the Senate to the insecure state of the port of New-York, and to detail the distressing consequences which must result should the metropolis be laid under contribution, be conflagrated, or possessed by a hostile foreign power—but I apprehend nothing more will be done than

authorizing the Governor to take measures for its security, if a war with some European power should appear to him inevitable.

It is to be lamented that the most influential characters in the representation from New-York could not be prevailed on to remain here. By thus neglecting their duty they have committed the affairs of their constituents to less able hands, and painful results must be expected.

If gentlemen of consideration in the public mind continue to refuse seats in either branch of the legislature, it is certain that a variety of evils will result to the community, and the metropolis will be most deeply affected. I wish, therefore, that the necessity in gentlemen to step forward and offer or consent to be candidates at the ensuing election, may be strongly urged. Mr. Burr, we are informed, will be a candidate for a seat in the Assembly; his views it is not difficult to appreciate. They alarm me, and if he prevails, I apprehend a total change of politics in the next Assembly—attended with other disagreeable consequences.

Mr. Adams's speech to the Senate at taking leave, and expressions on that, at his inauguration, have left very unfavorable impressions on my mind, and created alarm, but it may not be prudent to state the reasons. We are all in health, and all join in love to you and all with you.

I am, dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

PH. SCHUYLER.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

March 22, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

It is now ascertained that Mr. Pinckney has been refused, and with circumstances of indignity. What is to be done? The share I have had in the public administration added to my interest as a citizen, make me extremely anxious that at this delicate crisis a course of conduct exactly proper may be adopted. I

offer to your consideration, without what appears to me ceremony, such a course.

First. I would appoint a day of humiliation and prayer. In such a crisis this appears to me proper in itself, and it will be politically useful to impress our nation that there is a serious state of things—to strengthen religious ideas in a contest, which in its progress may require that our people may consider themselves as the defenders of their country against atheism, conquest, and anarchy. It is far from evident to me that the progress of the war may not call on us to defend our firesides and our altars. And any plan which does not look forward to this as possible, will, in my opinion, be a superficial one.

Second. I would call Congress together at as *short a day* as a majority of both houses can assemble.

Third. When assembled, I would appoint a commission extraordinary, to consist of Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison, together with Mr. Cabot and Mr. Pinckney. To be useful it is important that a man agreeable to the French should go. But neither *Madison* nor Jefferson ought to go alone. The three will give security. It will flatter the French pride. It will engage American confidence, and recommend the people to what shall be eventually necessary. The commission should be instructed to explain; to ask a rescinding of the order under which we suffer, and reparation for the past—to remodify our treaties under proper guards. On the last idea I will trouble you hereafter.

Fourth. The Congress should be urged to take defensive measures, these to be an *embargo*, unless with convoy by special license.

Additional revenue for additional expenses.

2. The creation of a naval force—including the prompt purchase and equipment of sloops of war—this force to serve as convoys to our trade.

3. Commissions to be granted to our merchant vessels, authorizing them to arm to defend themselves; to capture when attacked, but not to cruise. The same instructions to our convoys.

4. The organization of a provisional army of twenty-five

thousand men, to be ready to serve if a war breaks out—in the mean time to receive certain compensations, but not full pay. The actual increase of our establishment in artillery and cavalry.

The following considerations appear to me weighty. The Empress of Russia is dead. Successors are too apt to contradict predecessors. The new Emperor may join Russia. The Emperor of Germany by this mean or by the fortune of war may be compelled to make peace. England may be left alone. America may be a good outlet for troublesome armies which the government is at a loss to manage. The governing passion of the Ruler of France has been revenge. Their interest is not to be calculated upon. To punish and humble us—to force us into a greater dependence, may be the plan of France.

At any rate we shall best guarantee ourselves against calamity by preparing for the work. In this time of general convulsion, in a state of things which threatens all civilization, 'tis a great folly to wrap ourselves up in a cloak of security.

The Executive before Congress meet ought to have a *well digested* plan and *to co-operate* in getting it adopted.

Yours truly, &c.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 26th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

On the 25th I was favored with your letter of the 22d. The first measure of calling Congress together had been determined on by the President the preceding evening, and I had the draught of the proclamation inclosed in my hand to present to him, when I received your letter. Some other of the measures suggested had been contemplated, and all will receive attention from me and my colleagues. I beg you to continue to communicate to me your ideas on public affairs, especially at the present interesting period.

You mention the appointing a commission extraordinary. We more than doubt the propriety of this step. The Directory have declared "qu'il ne reconnaîtra, et ne recevra plus de ministre plénipotentiaire des Etats Unis jusqu' après le redressment des griefs demandé au gouvernement Américaine, et que la Republique Française est en droit d'en attendre." These "griefs" are doubtless detailed by citizens Adet and M. Delacroix, as exhibited in the notes of the former and the summary of the latter, and which you will see in my letter to General Pinckney, which I had the pleasure to send you in print. *All the important acts of the government must therefore be reversed before a minister can be admitted.* The former is impossible, and there seems therefore no opening at present for a new mission. This new mission is what the enemies of our government wish for, however circumstances may oppose it. In suggesting "a commission extraordinary," I presume, you did not know that the refusal to "receive another minister until," &c., had been so peremptory.

I am going to prepare a state of the information received from Mr. Pinckney for the press. Anonymously, yet with clear marks of authenticity, and it will, if approved by the President, be speedily published. It seems highly important that the public mind should be enlightened as to *facts*.

I am very sincerely and affectionately yours, &c.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

New-York, March 29th, 1797.

Dear Sir:

The post of yesterday brought me your letter of the day before.

I regret that the idea of a commission extraordinary appears of doubtful propriety. For after very mature reflection I am entirely convinced of its expediency. I do not understand the passage you cite as excluding the reception of a *special extraordi-*

nary minister, but of an extraordinary resident minister. It seems impossible that the Directory can mean to say that they will shut the door to all explanation, even as to the *nature* and *measure* of the redress of grievances which they require. They speak too hastily not to authorize a large interpretation of what they say.

But if I were certain they would not hear the commission, it would not prevent my having recourse to it. It would be my policy, if such a temper exists in them, to accumulate the proofs of it with a view to union at home.

This union (I do not expect to proselyte all the leaders of faction) appears to me a predominant consideration; and with regard to France, more than ordinary pains are requisite to attain it.

That the enemies of the government desire the measure, is a cogent reason with me for adopting it; because I would meet them on their own ground and disarm them of the argument, that all has not been done which might have been done towards preserving peace.

The *estimation* of the merit of all our past measures depends on the final preservation of peace. This, besides the interest of the country in peace, is a very powerful reason for attempting every thing. The best friends of the government will expect it; and if this expedient be not adopted, it seems to me rupture will inevitably follow.

There is an opinion industriously inculcated (which nobody better than myself knows to be false), that the *actual* administration are endeavoring to provoke a war. It is all important by the last possible sacrifice, to confound this charge. I cannot but add that I have not only a strong wish, but an *extreme anxiety*, that the measure in question may be adopted.

To attain the end of it, however, it is very material to engage in the errand a man who will have the full confidence of the adverse party, and who will be agreeable to France.

This cannot be done without employing others with him. Hence the idea of a commission, which to me appears capable of attaining every advantage and obviating every danger.

I am also desirous of impressing the public mind strongly by a religious solemnity, to take place about the meeting of Congress. I also think the step intrinsically proper.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

March 30th, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Every one who can properly appreciate the situation of our affairs at this moment, in all the extent of possible circumstances, must be extremely anxious for such a course of conduct in our government, as will unite the utmost prudence with energy. It has been a considerable time my wish, that a commission extraordinary* should be constituted to go to France, to *explain*, *demand*, negotiate, &c. I was particularly desirous that the first measure of the present President's administration should have been that. But it has not happened. I now continue to wish earnestly that the same measure may go into effect, and that the meeting of the Senate may be accelerated for that purpose. Without opening a new channel of negotiation, it seems to me the door to accommodation is shut, and rupture will follow, if not prevented by a general peace. Who, indeed, can be certain that a general pacification of Europe may not leave us alone to receive the law from France? Will it be wise to omit any thing to parry, if possible, these great risks?

Perhaps the Directory have declared they will not receive a minister till their grievances shall have been redressed.

This can hardly mean more than that they will not receive a resident minister. It cannot mean that they will not hear an extraordinary messenger, who may even be sent to know what will satisfy.

Suppose they do. It will still be well to convince the peo-

* Madison, Pinckney, Cabot.

ple, that the government has done all in its power, and that the Directory are unreasonable.

But the enemies of the government call for the measure. To me this is a very strong reason for pursuing it. It will meet them on their own ground, and disarm them of the plea that something has been omitted.

I ought, my good friend, to apprise you, for you may learn it from no other, that a suspicion begins to *dawn* among the friends of the government, that the *actual* administration is not much averse from war with France. How very important to obviate this!

The accounts just received, offer a great danger, that the Emperor may be compelled to make peace. *Paul* of Russia is evidently lukewarm in the cause of the allies. From lukewarmness to enmity, when fortune takes the other side, is but a step.

If England is left to bear the burthen alone, who can say that France may not venture to sport an army to this country? It may get rid of troublesome spirits.

As in the case of England, so now, my opinion is, to exhaust the expedients of negotiation; and, at the same time, to prepare *vigorously* for the worst. This is sound policy. Any omission or deficiency either way, will be a great error.

God bless you.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 30th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I believe I mentioned in my last that I was going to sketch a state of facts relative to Mr. Pinckney's mission for publication. I now inclose it. That the facts should be known to our citizens was deemed important. I thought it highly important that the representatives should come together, impressed with the sentiments of their constituents, on the reprehensible conduct of the French government, which made loud complaints of wrongs, but

refused to hear our answer, or to enter on any discussion of the subjects of complaint, by refusing to acknowledge a special minister, sent from the United States for the direct purpose of making explanations, and that demanded of conscious innocence a confession of offences and redress of injuries never committed, as the preliminary of receiving our minister. The abominable depredations on our commerce, their unfounded complaints, their preposterous refusal to hear our answer, and the indignities offered to our ambassador, combined, and fully known to the people of the United States, it might be fairly hoped would so powerfully operate in removing their ill-founded and ill-requited attachments to France, and even excite such a spirit of just resentment and pride, as would effectually control certain men who have seemed willing to chain us to that republic, and make us lick the feet of violent and unprincipled rulers.

The statement of facts being prepared, I expected to hand it yesterday to Mr. Fenno for publication, but some scruples arose about its expediency. The facts are extracted from General Pinckney's letters of December 20th and January 6th. The objections were, that it might be deemed *irritating*—that it would be deemed an official publication, though anonymous; that such manifestly official publications have not heretofore been made, except to Congress; and then at their approaching sessions the letters themselves will be laid before both Houses; that America will expect the Executive to use every means of cultivating peace, and to hazard nothing which can be construed into a tendency to provoke a war. But the same objections substantially were made by our French American patriots to my letter to General Pinckney, though written with extreme moderation, and containing answers and explanations to complaints which the French minister himself had the impudence to address to the citizens of the United States, whom those patriots would gladly continue to keep in the dark, and, in short, prostrate by an unconditional submission at the feet of the most ambitious and terrible tyrants that ever cursed the earth.

The publication being thus suspended, I inclose the statement for your information. You need not return it, as I have a

fair copy. I need not have been so minute in the detail; but the substance of the facts, I still think, ought to be published, and without delay, and in such form as to bear evident marks of authenticity; without which, they will not gain universal belief, and, therefore, fail of the impression which I wished to have had produced by the publication. If you can drop me a line, expressing your opinion on the matter, I shall be much obliged.

I am, with sincere respect, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 31st, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of March 30th, and I consider it as a great acquisition. It developes the origin of a circumstance which came to my knowledge at the close of the last session, which filled my mind with inexpressible surprise. To you I will say, but in the most perfect confidence, that the President had determined on instituting a commission, *but it would not have been composed as you now propose.* I believe no one of the heads of departments knows of the decision except myself. I had attributed it to Mr. Ames, from a casual expression, and I own, that by means of my most sincere and urgent expostulations—nay, supplications—it was postponed.

I am far from believing, that considering General Pinckney's *diplomatic rank*, his personal character, and the *special* objects of his mission, which were *specified* in *his letters* of *credence*, and *communicated* to the *Directory*, that there is any just, or even specious pretext, for his rejection. On the contrary, it appears to me that France has instantly rejected a fair and equitable proposition for a discussion, and adjustment of the existing disputes. That the national indignity is such, that *it must be noticed.* There is a point, but where I allow to be uncertain, below which the government cannot stoop without losing the confidence of the

people, and producing that despondency, loss of credit, and want of public concert, which would ruin our affairs. I wish we may find that our apathy has not been already carried to a fatal extreme. The plan of measures I would propose is as follows:—

1st. That the President should, in his speech to Congress, take a view of the complaints of France, and of the measures adopted by his predecessor, particularly in the mission of Mr. Pinckney, and should give them his decided approbation; that he should intimate, but in delicate terms, that France has rejected an equitable opportunity for discussion, but that this would not prevent him from persevering in the line of negotiation.

That measures would be accordingly pursued for renewing proposals to, and entering upon negotiations with the government of France, whenever its consent can be obtained.

2d. That the President should recommend, and in more than usual terms of confidence, the adoption of the following measures. 1st. An increase of revenue. 2d. The arming of our vessels for defence, with the right of capturing the attacking force. 3d. The equipment of a number of stout merchant ships and galleys, to defend our coasts. 4th. The fortification of our forts. 5th. The enrollment of a land force (principally with a view of preventing insurrections of slaves in the Southern States). 6th. A power in the Executive to arrest vessels and persons suspected of intending to cruise against our trade, or nations with whom we are at peace.

3d. A serious and firm call upon Congress for their united and vigorous support of the Executive, with an appeal to the heroic generosity and patriotism of the people, in the present critical state of affairs. My own ideas of the system and intentions of France would lead me further in the *defensive* and *cautionary* measures that I have proposed; but I am sensible of the impolicy of anticipating public opinion.

On the subject of negotiation, I would ever be ready to meet France, and keep an agent or agents in Europe, ready for that purpose; but I am not willing to admit, that the government has already done *less* than the occasion required, or that France is *justifiable* in refusing to recognize Mr. Pinckney. I am also free to declare, that I conceive the claims of France, in any other than

the last and most extreme necessity, utterly inadmissible. They, in fact, require a surrender of national independence. I would propose to *retract* nothing. I would not refuse a modification of treaties, if desired. The idea of a commission consisting of Mr. Madison, or any other man like him, I must own to you, is one which I can never adopt without the utmost reluctance. I have no confidence in Mr. Madison. He has been a frequenter of Mr. Adet's political meetings. I have been just informed, that Mr. Adet has suggested the idea of sending this gentleman. We know that the French count upon the support of a party in this country, and, so shameless is the faction grown, that positive proof of a devotion to French views is, with many, no injury to a man's popularity. If the government suffers France to dictate what description of men shall be appointed to public trusts, our country is undone. From that moment the confidence of all the old-fashioned, honorable, and virtuous men in the interior country, is irrecoverably lost.

Another consequence of not rejecting the interference of France is, that it will encourage other nations to interfere, especially Great Britain, and will, moreover, countenance the calumny that a British faction exists. The French say that Mr. Jay and his friends were in the British interest, and that therefore he was appointed. Will it be safe or proper to appoint a man known to be of the French party, and thus give to a falsehood the force of argument? If I know any thing of human nature, this will be the effect on the minds of thousands.

I have no objection to sending a man of neutral politics, at least on party questions, if he be a man of sense, firmness, and integrity. General Pinckney is of this description. If a commission of three is generally preferred, it is a point perhaps not to be contested, though, I own, it does not strike me agreeably. Yet, how is the commission to be composed? Must all concur, or will the concurrence of two suffice? In either case, mutual confidence will be essential to success. From what was on the point of being done, I presume Mr. Cabot to be out of the question. If a man of his principles were to be associated with Mr. Madison, either nothing would be done, or something worse than

nothing. Mr. Madison would insist on a submission to France, or would obstruct a settlement, and throw the disgrace on the friends of government. Either result would deliver the country, bound hand and foot, to French influence. If nothing was done, the obstinacy of the Federalists would be complained of; if something was done, however humiliating, the responsibility would be divided, and all the mischief would be attributed to the desperate state of affairs induced by the *fatal* treaty with Great Britain.

You know that I am accustomed to respect your opinions; and I am not so ignorant of the extent of your influence upon the friends of government, as not to be sensible, that if you are known to favor the sending of a commission, so the thing must and will be. When the body of both parties concur in a measure, individual opinion stands for nothing. In this case, what would be the objection against sending Mr. Ingersoll, of this city, or some such character, to be united with J. Q. Adams, or Mr. Murray and General Pinckney, to rendezvous at Amsterdam, until the consent of France to negotiate can be obtained. Is it necessary that the mission should proceed directly to France, and must Mr. Madison be a member?

I should be sorry, if the friends of the government were to consider me, or any of the public officers, as desirous of producing a war with France, because I should consider this as evidence that our affairs are desperate. If the public pulse does not beat higher than that of the government, all is over. There ought to be a zeal for strenuous measures, and this zeal ought to be an engine in the hands of government for preserving peace. I think I can assure you, that the motion of our ship cannot be adjusted to a minute scale, if the present course is attempted to be varied; it will in future be nearly opposite the present.

The present is a moment of apparent tranquillity, but I conjecture, that it is a calm, which forebodes a hurricane. The Executive will either find violent and steady gales from one point, or be assailed with a tornado, which will throw every thing into confusion. I predict that no treaty, no compromise, no concession, will afford security. Revenue is essential, and there will, I

fear, be insuperable objections started by the friends and enemies of government. Credit has been abused; has been exhausted by senseless speculations.

Having no ambition no gratify, no theory or project to support, I shall be ready to aid my country with my best exertions, and shall be happy to receive your opinions, and to know the state of public opinion. No person can exceed me in sincere wishes that what is proper may be done.

MIRANDA TO HAMILTON.

A Paris le 1re Avril, 1797.

MON CHER ET RESPECTABLE AMI:

C'est depuis quatre ans que je reprends la plume pour vous dire que je suis encore du nombre des vivants qui restent en France depuis la tyrannie. Voici *un livre* qui viens de paraître sur la revolution française par *Desodoards*. Il contient tous les faits principaux, et indique les causes, avec connaissance, impartialité et modération, à mon avis,—et tous ceux qui connaissent à fonds la revolution, seront, confirmés dans cette opinion que j'avais formé d'àbord en le lisant. Ne manquez pas de le lire immédiatement, de le faire passer après le President, s'il ne la pas lu encore. MM. Paine et Monroe, qui sont déjà partis d'ici pour se rendre chez vous, ne seront pas, peut-être du même avis; mais je crois qu'ils ont mieux connu le *système des jacobins* que celui de la Révolution française. Enfin il est certain, mon ami, que l'ex-President Washington fit une faute bien grave en envoyant ici pour ambassadeurs M. Morris, et M. Monroe, tous deux exagérés dans un sens contraire. Il est vrai que le premier est un homme infiniment plus instruit, et bien moins *extravagant* que l'autre. P—e est devenu un *Marat* tout à fait. Dieu veuille qu'il ne fasse pas plus de mal au nouveau monde, que l'autre n'en a fait à la France.

Adieu, mon cher ami. Continuez à soutenir avec courage la

cause de la *liberté* que tant de brigands et d' ignorans déshonorent depuis cinq ans, tout en prétendant de l'aimer et de la défendre. Je suis reuni ici (et pour cela persécuté encore), avec le petit nombre de ceux qui la connaissent et qui la défendent sincèrement; veuille la Providence nous accorder du succès pour le bonheur de ce pays—ci aussi que pour la tranquillité des autres, au moins. Donnez moi des nouvelles de nos amis communs, Knox, et W. Duer—faites leur bien des complimens de ma part en leur communiquant la partie de cette lettre ce que vous jugerez à propos, aussi bien que le livre.

Je vous prie de présenter mes respectueux complimens au général Washington—ainsi qu'à tous mes amis à New York, &c. &c.

F. Miranda.

P. S.—Je viens de recevoir dans le moment une lettre de M. Monroe, par son Sécretaire Prevost. Le contenu de cette lettre me fait soupçonner quelque *cabale* où intrigue de Messieur Paine et M——e (avec lesquels je n'ai jamais eu aucune liaison) ainsi je m'empresse de vous envoyer copie de cette petite correspondance, pour vous mettre à même de pouvoir répondre aux calomnies qui sont les armes de la *secte Jacobite.*

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

April 1st, 1797.

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 30th, with the statement inclosed. I do not believe that its publication would have any influence upon the question of a rupture with France; but yet, as it seems that those who surround the President are not agreed in the matter—as an opinion is industriously circulated, that too much fuel has been added by the publications of the government—as it is important to disarm a certain party of the weapons of

calumny—as it is in general best to avoid unofficial publications of official matter—as it may be even useful, for the sake of *impression*, to reserve the disclosure till the meeting of Congress, when the accumulation of insult may be the instrument of giving a strong impulse,—I rather advise the withholding of the statement. When Congress meet, it will be very useful to have a statement of this kind ready, as the abstract of the communications, to present to the people a summary view.

Such, my dear sir, is the infatuation of a great part of our community, that it will be policy in our government to do a great deal too much to make the idea palpable, that rupture was inevitable. Adieu.

Yours truly, &c.

If the statement is published, I would close with the words "January last," in the last paragraph. The residue will make a good separate newspaper paragraph. Pray, who is the emigrant alluded to?

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, April 2d, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

As Mr. Church is the bearer, I refer you to him for what it would take many pages to relate, and will only say, that, notwithstanding the injuries we continue to receive from France, I still hope the same policy that has hitherto kept us out of the war will continue to influence and decide our government.

How the new President will conduct himself in a situation thorny and embarrassing, remains to be seen; the first step is very important, and therefore should be deeply and extensively considered.

Every thing looks like an active and, to a certain degree, a vigorous campaign; yet, with all these appearances of the con-

tinuance of the war, peace may be near. But what will be the consequence of such a peace as alone can be had at this time? A late arrêt of the Directory gives notice to all French citizens, that the treaty of February, 1778, between France and the United States of America, has been (of full right), in virtue of the second article thereof, modified so as to conform to the stipulations contained in the treaty of 1794 between the United States and Great Britain. The arrêt proceeds to specify the modification.

1. All enemy's goods, and all merchandise, "non suffisament constatée neutre," on board American vessels, shall be lawful prize, but the vessel shall be released, &c.

2. To the articles of contraband specified in the treaty of Feb., 1778, shall be added, "les bois de construction," &c., enumerating the additional articles of contraband contained in the treaty between the United States and Great Britain.

3. "D'après l'article 21 du traité de Londres du 19 Nov., 1794, tout individu reconnu Americain, porteur d'une commission donnée par les ennemis de la France, ainsi que tout marin de cette nation faisants partie des équipages des navires ou vaisaux ennemis sera, par ce seul fait, declaré pirate, et traité comme tel, sans qu'il puisse, dans aucun cas, alleguer qu'il y a été forcé par violence, menaces ou autrement."

4. According to the law of 14th Feb., 1793, the regulations of that of the 21st Oct., 1744, and of that of the 26th July, 1778, concerning the trial of neutral ships and cargoes, shall be observed; and in consequence thereof, every American vessel shall be a good *prize*, on board whereof there shall not be found un Rôle d'équipage en bonne forme, such as is required by the form annexed to the treaty of the 6th February, 1778, the execution of which is hereby required.

5. Respects certain causes of forfeiture by reason of misconduct in destroying prizes, possessing double papers, &c., &c.; 6 repeals certain former regulations; 7 directs the insertion of the arrêt in the bulletin of the laws, &c.

The third article is a false construction, for obvious purposes, of the analogous article of our treaty with England. The fourth will render *all our ships* liable to capture, and, if acted upon, to

condemnation, since no American vessel has on board her the document required. In our printed laws are also the treaties, and among them those we formed with France; to the commercial treaty, though the 25th and 27th articles refer to it, there is no model or form of a passport. Mr. Jefferson has certified that treaty to be correct, and a perfect copy, as you will see by his printed certificate in the law book.

I have a copy of the commercial treaty with France, printed in London in 1783, which has the form of a passport, rôle d'équipage, &c., annexed. A copy of it I have given to Mr. Church, who will show it to you, by which you will see that none of our vessels are exempt from capture if this copy is that referred to in the late arrêt. Indeed, it seems too absurd in some things to be genuine, yet I suspect it is the model or form referred to and required by the fourth article of the arrêt.

Farewell. Yours, &c.,

RUFUS KING.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

April 5th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of March 31st. I hope nothing in my last was misunderstood. Could it be necessary I would assure you, that no one has a stronger conviction than myself, of the purity of the motives which direct your public conduct, or of the good sense and judgment by which it is guided. If I have a fear (you will excuse my frankness), it is, lest the *strength* of your feelings, the companions of energy of character, should prevent that pliancy to circumstances which is sometimes indispensable. I beg you only to watch yourself on this score, and the public will always find in you an able as well as a faithful servant.

The situation of our country, my dear sir, is singularly critical. The map of Europe is every way discouraging. There is too much reason to apprehend, that the Emperor of Germany,

in danger from Russia and Prussia, perhaps the Porte, as well as France, may be compelled to yield to the views of the latter. England, standing alone, may be driven to a similar issue. It is certain that great consternation, in court and country, attended the intelligence of Bonaparte's last victories. Either to be in rupture with France united with England, alone or singly, as is possible, would be a most unwelcome situation. Divided as we are, who can say what would be hazarded by it?

In such a situation it appeared to me, we should rather err on the side of condescension, than on the opposite side. We ought to do every thing to avoid rupture, without unworthy sacrifices; and to keep in view, as a primary object, union at home.

No measure can tend more to this, than an extraordinary mission. And it is certain to fulfil the ends proposed. It ought to embrace a character in whom France and the opposition have full credit. What risk can attend sending *Madison*, if combined, as I propose, with Pinckney and Cabot, or such a man (two deciding)? Depend on it—*Pinckney* is a man of honor and loves his country. Cabot we both know. Besides, there ought to be certain leading instructions from which they may not deviate.

I agree with you, that we have nothing to retract; that we ought to risk every thing before we submit to any dishonorable terms. But we may remould our treaties. We may agree to put France on the same footing as Great Britain, by our treaty with her. We may also liquidate, with a view to *future wars*, the import of the mutual guaranty in the treaty of alliance; substituting specific succors, and defining the *casus fœderis*. But this last may or may not be done, though, with me, it is a favorite object.

Ingersol will not fulfil the object; but I would rather have him than do nothing.

I am clearly of opinion, with you, that the President shall come forward to Congress in a manly tone, and that Congress shall adopt vigorous defensive measures. Those you propose are proper, and some others on which I may write hereafter.

If Madison is well coupled, I do not think his intrigues can operate as you imagine. Should he advocate dishonorable con-

cessions to France, the public opinion will not support. His colleague, by address, and showing a disposition to do enough, may easily defeat his policy, and maintain the public confidence. Besides that, it is possible too much may be taken for granted with regard to Mr. Madison.

Yours very truly,

A. HAMILTON.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 5th, 1797.

I received your letter of the and accord with your opinion that the proposed publication of the intelligence from General Pinckney should be omitted. The "Emigrant," we conclude to be Perigord, formerly bishop of Autun. Some time since, I was informed, that he left this country with signs of enmity towards it, and the Directory would naturally place great confidence in his opinion, and yet it is so extravagant we may wonder that it should gain any credit. But, as Barras said to Monroe, "they will not stoop to calculate the consequence of our condescension to our ancient tyrants," nor, it would seem, of their own atrocities. They are giddy with their successes, and stick at no means which promise to promote their views of domination and plunder.

I have omitted to answer your letter of 10th February. To-day I have examined Chancellor Livingston's letter books. On the 25th of March, 1783, he wrote to the American commissioners, Adams, Franklin, Jay, and Laurens, acknowledging the receipt of their letter, with the "preliminary articles." He tells them that "the steadiness manifested in not treating without an express acknowledgment of our independence previous to a treaty, is approved, and it is not doubted but it accelerated that declaration"—yet you will recollect, as I have stated in my printed letter to General Pinckney, that Count de Vergennes urged Mr. Jay's negotiating with Mr. Oswald, without insisting on that previous acknowledgment, and this concurring with other facts,

inspired Mr. Jay with suspicions which the Chancellor censures. The grounds of those suspicions were detailed in Mr. Jay's letter of September 18th, of which the Chancellor acknowledged the receipt on the 30th December, 1782.

In the same letter of March 25th, 1783, to the commissioners, after informing them that the preliminary articles had been laid before Congress, "that they had met with their warmest approbation, and been generally seen by the people in the most favorable point of view," and made some comments on the subject, and noticed the British debts, which, says he, no honest man could wish to withhold, he adds:—"But, gentlemen, though the issue of your treaty has been successful, though I am satisfied that we are much indebted to your firmness and perseverance, to your accurate knowledge of our situation and of our wants for this success, yet I feel no little pain at the distrust manifested in the management of it, particularly in signing the treaty without communicating it to the court of Versailles, till after the signature, and in concealing the separate article from it, even when signed. I have examined with the most minute attention all the reasons assigned in your several letters to justify these suspicions; I confess that they do not appear to strike me so forcibly as they have done you, and it gives me pain that the character for candor and fidelity to its engagements, which should always characterize a great people, should have been impeached thereby. The concealment was, in my opinion, absolutely unnecessary. For had the court of France disapproved the terms you had made after they had been agreed upon, they could not have acted so absurdly as to counteract you at that late day, and thereby put themselves in the power of an enemy, who would certainly betray them, and perhaps justify you in making terms for yourselves. The secret article is no otherwise important than as it carries in it the seeds of enmity to the court of Spain, and shows a marked preference for an open enemy." The Chancellor continues his remarks on the secret article, and expresses his opinion that the same boundary for West Florida should have been stipulated, into whose hands soever it might fall at the conclusion of the war. "I feel (says he) for the em-

barrassment explanations on this subject must subject you to, when this secret is known to your allies." He inclosed to them his report (or letter) to Congress, on the manner in which the negotiation had been conducted, in regard to the concealment from the court of Versailles, and the secret article, and the motions to which the communication gave rise in Congress. But while under consideration, letters arrived from Count D'Estaing and the Marquis de la Fayette, containing accounts that preliminaries (I suppose of a general peace) were signed, and the whole affair went over without any decision.

In his report to Congress, he reminds them of their reiterated expressions of confidence in France, and quotes their public resolution of the 4th of October, 1782, "That Congress will not enter into the discussion of any overtures for pacification, but in confidence and in concert with his most Christian Majesty." Yet (says he), "it has unfortunately so happened that the ministers of these States have imagined they had sufficient grounds to suspect the sincerity of the court of France, and have not only thought it prudent to agree upon and sign preliminaries with Great Britain, without communicating them till after the signature to the ministers of his most Christian Majesty, but have permitted a separate article to be inserted in their treaty, which they still conceal from the court of France." This he considers as reducing Congress to a most embarrassing situation, either of contradicting all their former professions of confidence in their ally, or of exposing their ministers at the court of France, "and that too when those ministers have obtained such terms from the court of London, as does great honor to them, and at least equals our highest expectations." The preamble to the provisional articles, he supposes to have been framed in England, and all his observations manifest his suspicions of insidious designs in that power. Finally, he submits the following resolutions:

"That the Secretary for Foreign Affairs be directed to communicate the separate article in the provisional preliminary treaty with Great Britain to the minister of his most Christian Majesty, in such manner as will best tend to remove any unfavorable impression it may make on the court of France of the sincerity of these States or their ministers.

"That the ministers for negotiating peace be informed of this communication, and of the reasons which influenced Congress to make it. That they be instructed to agree that in whatsoever hands West Florida may remain at the conclusion of the war, the United States will be satisfied that the line of north boundary be as described in the said separate article.

"That it is the sense of the United States in Congress that the articles agreed upon between the ministers of these States and those of his Britannic Majesty, are not to take place until a peace shall have been actually signed between their Most Christian and Britannic Majesties."

Actually signed!—If you turn to the preamble of the provincial articles you will see that it was declared that the treaty of peace which the articles were to constitute, was not to be concluded "until terms of a peace shall be agreed upon between Great Britain and France, and his Britannic Majesty shall be ready to conclude such treaty accordingly." Now, says the Chancellor, "this preamble is so expressed as to render it very doubtful whether our treaty does not take place the moment France and England have agreed on the terms of their treaty, though France should refuse to sign till her allies were satisfied." As you have not mentioned the object of your inquiry on this subject, this detail may perhaps be deficient or redundant. In either case you will advise me, and particularly I must request you to acknowledge the receipt of this letter, that I may be sure of its having reached your hands.

I am, dear Sir, very truly yours.

HAMILTON TO WM. SMITH.

New-York, April 5, 1797.

I have received, my dear sir, your letter of the 2d of April, (1797,) with your little work accompanying it, which I shall

read with the interest I take in the author, the first leisure hour. I have cast my eye over it, and like very much the plan.

Our affairs are indeed very critical. But I am sorry to find that I do not agree with several of my friends. I am clearly of opinion for an extraordinary mission, and as clearly that it should embrace Madison. I do not think we ought to construe the declaration of the Directory against receiving a Minister Plenipotentiary, as an *extraordinary* mission *pro hac vice*. And if it does, it would be no reason with me against it. I would accumulate the proofs of French violence, and demonstrate to all our citizens that nothing possible has been omitted. That a certain party desires it is with me a strong reason for it—since I would disarm them of all plea that we have not made every possible effort for peace. The idea is a plausible one, that as we sent an Envoy Extraordinary to Britain, so we ought to send one to France. And plausible ideas are always enough for the multitude.

These and other reasons (and principally to avoid rupture with a political monster, which seems destined soon to have no competitor but England), make me even anxious for an extraordinary mission.

And to produce the desired effect, it seems to me essential that it shall embrace a *distinguished* character agreeable to France, and having the confidence of the adverse party. Hence I think of Madison, but I think of him only as *one*, because I would not trust him alone. I would unite with him Pinckney, and some strong man from the north, Jay, Cabot, and two of the three should rule. We should then be safe.

I need not tell you that I am disposed to make no sacrifices to France. I had rather perish myself and family than see the country disgraced. But I would try hard to avoid rupture, and if that cannot be, to unite the opinions of all good citizens of whatever political denomination. This is with me a mighty object.

I will give you hereafter my ideas of what ought to be done when Congress meet. My plan ever is to combine energy with moderation.

Yours affectionately.

HAMILTON TO KING.

April 8th, 1797.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your letter of the 6th of February. The intelligence that the Directory have ordered away our minister is every way unpleasant. It portends, too, a final rupture as the only alternative to an ignominious submission. Much public feeling has been excited; but the government, I trust and believe, will continue prudent, and do every thing that honor permits towards accommodation. It is, however, to be feared that France, successful, will be too violent and imperious to meet us on any admissible ground.

Congress are called together. I can give you no conjecture as to what will be done. Opinions are afloat. My idea is, another attempt to pacify by negotiation, vigorous preparation for war, and defensive measures with regard to our trade. But there never was a period of our affairs, in which I could less foresee the state of things.

I believe there is no danger of want of firmness in the Executive. If he is not ill-advised, he will not want prudence. I mean, that he is himself disposed to a *prudently firm* course.

You know the mass of our Senate. That of our House of Representatives is not ascertained. A small majority on the right side is counted upon. In Virginia it is understood that Morgan comes in place of Rutherford, and Evans in place of Page. The whole result of the Virginia election is not known.

The conduct of France has been a very powerful medicine for the political disease of our country. I think the community improves in soundness.

Adieu; God bless you.

HAMILTON TO WILLIAM SMITH.

April 10th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

Since my last to you, I have perused with great satisfaction your little work on our governments. I like the execution no less than the plan. If my health and leisure should permit, I would make some notes; but you cannot depend on it, as I am not only extremely occupied, but in feeble health.

I send you my ideas of the course of conduct proper in our present situation. It is unpleasant to me to know, that I have for some time differed materially from many of my friends on public subjects, and I particularly regret, that at the present critical juncture, there is in my apprehension much danger that *sensibility* will be an overmatch for policy. We seem now to feel and reason as the *Jacobins* did when Great Britain insulted and injured us, though certainly, we have at least as much need of a temperate conduct now as we had then. I only say, God grant that the public interest may not be sacrificed at the shrine of irritation and mistaken pride. Farewell.

Affectionately yours, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 12th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter of April 5th, and inclose Mr. King's letter. I presume that the British commissioners under the 6th article (for Debts) will contend for a similar construction respecting cases determined in our courts. Is there any ground on which the principle can be opposed?

Are we to consider the British credit as at an end. If so, what effects will it probably produce here?

Your further opinions respecting the course to be pursued by France will be very acceptable.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, April 13th, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you. I am just informed that an order is come to the custom-house, not to clear out any vessels if armed, unless destined for the East Indies. Under the present circumstances, I very much doubt the expediency of this measure. The excesses of France justify passiveness in the government; and its inability to protect the merchants, requires that it should leave them to protect themselves. Nor do I fear that it would tend to rupture with France, if such be not her determination otherwise. The legality of this prohibition cannot be defended; it must stand on its necessity. It would, I think, have been enough to require security that the vessel is not to be employed to cruise against any of the belligerent powers. Perhaps even now, where vessels have been armed previous to the receipt of the prohibition, it is safe and advisable to except them on the condition of such security. Think of this promptly. The general measure may be further considered at leisure. Nor am I prepared to say that, having *been taken*, it ought to be revoked.

I will send you shortly, some remarks in reply to questions you propose. Adieu.

Yours, &c.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 29th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

In contemplating the idea suggested by you of arming the merchant vessels of the United States, for *defence only*, a difficulty at once presented. This measure is incompatible with

the right of a belligerent power to visit and examine neutral vessels, to ascertain whether they have on board contraband goods; and where a treaty does not alter the law of nations, whether they are laden with enemies' goods—to see, indeed, whether under neutral colors, they are such, or enemies. The answer suggested to myself is this:—that the power at war who has discarded treaties and the laws of nations, avowedly and practically, is not entitled to corresponding rights—rights relating to the same subject, under such treaties and laws; and consequently that American vessels, if allowed to be defensively armed, are not to submit to any such visits. Vessels of a neutral nation, under convoy of the armed ships of such nation, I take it, are not subject to such visits, and our armed merchant vessels *would be their own convoy.* I do not know where this question is treated of in books; you, probably, can inform me. The arming our merchant vessels, though only for *defence*, will be zealously opposed in the House of Representatives, on the above ground, that as well by treaty as the law of nations, the French have a right to visit our vessels, and because of the danger of its leading to open war. On the subject of a commission extraordinary to the French Republic, much difficulty occurs. To give a better prospect of success to this measure, you observe that a man agreeable to them should go, and you name two persons, either of whom you would advise to be joined with Mr. Pinckney, and another on whose attachment to the system of our government as established and administered, perfect reliance may be placed. But in the first place would either of the two you name consent to go? You certainly reckon on General Pinckney's inviolable integrity and federal attachments. Will not the man whom you name as agreeable to the French, see that his hands will be tied? If you place any confidence in either of the two, that if commissioned he will faithfully consult and firmly persist in measures which the rights and neutral condition of our country demand, without suffering his choice, his passions, or his prejudices in favor of France, and from hatred to Great Britain, to sacrifice any of our rights or interests to the former, why name a third commissioner, of principles directly opposed, to check and

effectually control him? I should be inclined to think that neither of the two would, under such a view of the case, accept the appointment, and one of them would perhaps, from his present station, deem it improper.

Would not the Directory also see such a commission, constituted as you propose, in the same point of view? And would they not say, that ostensibly there was an intention to manifest a particular respect and attention to them, while, in reality, we meant no such thing? Or do you consider General Pinckney as a neutral character in the politics of our country, and, by appointing two associates of opposite characters, enable him to hold the balance? This is the most favorable light in which I can view the proposition. But when we consider the asperity of the parties here, and that the two characters named have been considered among the leaders, that probably neither has a confidence in the other, that your friend in particular will perhaps fear to disclose his sentiments on the most interesting questions, lest they should be betrayed to the French,—is there a well grounded hope that the mission would be successful?

On the organization of a provisional army to receive certain compensations, but not full pay, I should be glad to receive your ideas a little in detail. The propriety of increasing our artillery establishment is clear, and I should imagine not difficult to obtain. I have my doubts of the cavalry; the militia corps of horse are already composed, generally speaking, of the best men and best horses in the country; but they need discipline. I much doubt, unless the danger of war should appear more certain than at present, whether even a *provisional army* will be granted. If not, perhaps a much larger army of select militia might be agreed to; the corps to be composed of volunteers, or draughts of young men from the general militia, and completely organized. The militia system to be improved.

On these several subjects, and any others relating to our French connections, I shall be happy to receive your communications as early as your leisure will admit.

I am most sincerely and respectfully yours, &c.

P. S. What if General Pinckney were to be appointed *Envoy Extraordinary*, or even Ambassador, with fresh instructions relative to the subjects of complaint? The Directory have said they will not receive another minister plenipotentiary until, &c. They refused to receive the Chargé d'Affaires of Sweden, sent to announce the young king's ascending the throne, because at other courts the same thing had been done by accredited *ministers*. [And they have made it a subject of serious complaint, as J. Q. Adams was well informed at the Hague, against Denmark, because that court omitted to announce to the Directory *the death of the old Queen Dowager*. He remarks, that they are seeking for pretences of quarrel with all the neutral commercial nations, their great object being to insist on measures to be adopted, or suffered by neutrals, to injure or destroy the commerce of Britain.] If a commission extraordinary should be appointed, what should you think of Mr. Barlow for a member? He has managed the negotiation with Algiers with great ability, address, and zeal, for the interest of his country. Having been formerly elected a member by the French Convention, he may be deemed of sufficient respectability. He is even admitted, I take it, to French citizenship. His talents are unquestionable. I should sooner confide in him than in Mr. Madison. The other person named by you I consider as out of the question, because of his station. Mr. Barlow has no personal antipathies and resentments to gratify—resentments engendered in the collision of parties at home.

SMITH TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 1st, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I should sooner have acknowledged the receipt of your interesting communication, had I not been informed of your journey to Albany.

I coincide perfectly in opinion with you as to the expediency

of measures of defence and an extraordinary mission. But I see very considerable difficulty in the measure of a commission, and still greater in its including Jefferson and Madison. From the former plan, I foresee embarrassment and increased expense without any benefit. If the majority of the commissioners be *Anti*-Gallicans, the party will not be gratified. We place an enemy in the commission without acquiring their support. If the majority be Gallicans, we give up the game. There are serious constitutional objections against Jefferson as commissioner, and Madison has done so much to prostrate this country at the feet of France, that I fear his appointment would appear humiliating, and give disgust to our friends. I doubt also whether either of them would go on this business, unless as sole envoy; certainly not, unless as senior commissioner, and this would be harsh to Pinckney, who has conducted himself well. From these considerations, I have been induced to think the most dignified and safe mode of doing this business, would be to send *Pinckney* a new commission either as envoy or ambassador extraordinary; he is near at hand, he is unexceptionable to all parties. The French have no personal objections to him, the Jacobins of most of the Southern States have great confidence in him, and he has made great sacrifices to go on a mission, which has hitherto been attended with nothing but mortification.

He is waiting at Amsterdam the orders of the Executive, probably expecting a commission of envoy extraordinary. It is not improbable, too, that any thing like slight to him may alienate more friends than would be acquired by adding to the mission one of the other party. I have lately met with a report of the Commissioners of Public Safety, in April '95, which was adopted by the Convention, on the subject of the different grades of ministers, wherein it is stated "that the sending of an *ambassador* is peculiarly agreeable to republics, and a particular mark of respect." This report preceded the reception of *De Stael* as ambassador *extraordinary* from Sweden. I have shown the Secretary of State the report, and the commission of De Stael. Perhaps it may be thought expedient to send a *commission* of *ambassador extraordinary* to Gen. Pinckney, and to give weight

and importance to the mission to add, in the character of secretary to the embassy, some character above the common class of private secretaries. This last point is, however, only a suggestion of my own. This practice is generally followed in Europe.

I have shown your letter to Tracy, and to Wolcott, and to McHenry, all of whom applied for the perusal of it, and were much pleased with every part, except the commission. This idea does not seem to coincide with the opinions of any of our friends here.

I leave town to-morrow for a jaunt of a few days to Lancaster, York, &c. On my return I hope to hear from you, and remain,

Dear Sir,
Very sincerely yours,
WM. SMITH.

HAMILTON TO ——— HAMILTON.

ALBANY, State of New-York, May the 2d, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Some days since I received with great pleasure your letter of the 10th of March. The mark it affords of your kind attention, and the particular account it gives me of so many relations in Scotland, are extremely gratifying to me. You no doubt have understood that my father's affairs at a very early day went to wreck; so as to have rendered his situation during the greatest part of his life far from eligible. This state of things occasioned a separation between him and me, when I was very young, and threw me upon the bounty of my mother's relatives, some of whom were then wealthy, though by vicissitudes to which human affairs are so liable, they have been since much reduced and broken up. Myself at about sixteen came to this country. Having always had a strong propensity to literary pursuits, by a course of steady and laborious exertion, I was able, by the age of nineteen, to qualify myself for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in

the College of New-York, and to lay the foundation by preparatory study for the future profession of the law.

The American Revolution supervened. My principles led me to take part in it; at nineteen I entered into the American army as Captain of Artillery. Shortly after I became, by his invitation, aid-de-camp to General Washington, in which station I served till the commencement of that campaign which ended with the siege of York in Virginia, and the capture of Cornwallis's army. The campaign I made at the head of a corps of light infantry, with which I was present at the siege of York, and engaged in some interesting operations.

At the period of the peace with Great Britain, I found myself a member of Congress by appointment of the legislature of this State.

After the peace, I settled in the city of New-York, in the practice of the law; and was in a very lucrative course of practice, when the derangement of our public affairs, by the feebleness of the general confederation, drew me again reluctantly into public life. I became a member of the Convention which framed the present Constitution of the United States; and having taken part in this measure, I conceived myself to be under an obligation to lend my aid towards putting the machine in some regular motion. Hence I did not hesitate to accept the offer of President Washington to undertake the office of Secretary of the Treasury.

In that office, I met with many intrinsic difficulties, and many artificial ones proceeding from passions, not very worthy, common to human nature, and which act with peculiar force in republics. The object, however, was effected, of establishing public credit, and introducing order in the finances.

Public office in this country has few attractions. The pecuniary emolument is so inconsiderable, as to amount to a sacrifice to any man who can employ his time with advantage in any liberal profession. The opportunity of doing good, from the jealousy of power and the spirit of faction, is too small in any station, to warrant a long continuance of private sacrifices. The enterprises of party had so far succeeded, as materially to weaken the necessary influence and energy of the Executive authority,

and so far diminish the power of doing good in that department, as greatly to take away the motives which a virtuous man might have for making sacrifices. The prospect was even bad for gratifying in future the love of fame, if that passion was to be the spring of action.

The union of these motives, with the reflections of prudence in relation to a growing family, determined me as soon as my plan had attained a certain maturity, to withdraw from office. This I did by a resignation about two years since, when I resumed the profession of the law in the city of New-York under every advantage I could desire.

It is a pleasant reflection to me, that since the commencement of my connection with General Washington to the present time, I have possessed a flattering share of his confidence and friendship.

Having given you a brief sketch of my political career, I proceed to some further family details.

In the year 1780, I married the second daughter of General Schuyler, a gentleman of one of the best families of this country, of large fortune, and no less personal and political consequence. It is impossible to be happier than I am in a wife; and I have five children, four sons and a daughter, the eldest a son somewhat passed fifteen, who all promise as well as their years permit, and yield me much satisfaction. Though I have been too much in public life to be wealthy, my situation is extremely comfortable, and leaves me nothing to wish but a continuance of health. With this blessing, the profits of my profession and other prospects authorize an expectation of such addition to my resources, as will render the eve of life easy and agreeable; so far as may depend on this consideration.

It is now several months since I have heard from my father, who continued at the island of St. Vincents. My anxiety at this silence would be greater than it is, were it not for the considerable interruption and precariousness of intercourse which is produced by the war.

I have strongly pressed the old gentleman to come and reside with me, which would afford him every enjoyment of which his

advanced age is capable; but he has declined it on the ground that the advice of his physicians leads him to fear, that the change of climate would be fatal to him. The next thing for me is, in proportion to my means, to endeavor to increase his comforts where he is.

It will give me the greatest pleasure to receive your son Robert at my house in New-York, and still more to be of use to him; to which end, my recommendation and interest will not be wanting, and I hope not unavailing. It is my intention to embrace the opening which your letter affords me to extend my intercourse with my relations in your country, which will be a new source of satisfaction to me.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

May 11th, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

On my return here I found your letter of the 29th. The sitting of a court of chancery, and important business there, have unavoidably delayed a reply; now, it must be much more cursory than I could wish.

As to the mission, in some shape or other, the more I have reflected upon it, the more has it appeared to me indispensable. To accomplish, with certainty, a principal object of it—the silencing of Jacobin criticism, and promoting union among ourselves—it is *very material* to engage in it a person who will have the Jacobin confidence; else, if France should still refuse to receive, or if receiving, the mission should prove unsuccessful, it will be said that this was because a suitable agent was not employed. Hence, my mind was led to Jefferson or Madison; but, as it would be unsafe to trust either alone, the idea of associates occurs as an essential part of the plan. This, likewise, is an expedient for saving Mr. Pinckney's feelings.

But will either of them go on this footing? If offered, and

they refuse, they will put themselves in the wrong; for on so great an emergency, they cannot justifiably decline the service without a good reason; and it would not be a good reason for refusal, that there was to be a *commission*. The refusal, too, if it happened, would furnish a reply to Jacobin clamor. It was offered to your leaders, and they would not act.

I confide in Pinckney's integrity and federal attachments; why, then, name a third? Because, 1st. Two may disagree, and there may be *inaction*. 2d. Though I have the confidence I mention, I think Pinckney has had too much French leaning to consider him, in conjunction with Jefferson or Madison, as perfectly safe. A third on whom perfect reliance could be placed, would secure Pinckney's co-operation. I do consider him, as in some sort, a *middle* character.

As to the two gentlemen named (Jefferson and Madison), it may be fairly observed to either of them, that the combination of character is essential to combine the confidence of the country, and to render the result, whatever it may be, acceptable. It may also be observed, that delicacy to Mr. Pinckney dictates this course—not to exclude him after what has happened. To Mr. Pinckney the state of parties here may also be pleaded.

The French Directory may also be made to understand indirectly that the association has proceeded from a desire in the Executive to unite confidence in the mission, and secure its success at home.

I should not despair that in such a crisis men of opposite politics might agree. I verily believe that Jefferson, *Pinckney*, and King, would agree. There might be a *joint* commission for action, and a separate commission to Jefferson, as envoy or ambassador extraordinary for *representation*.

I miscalculate if Jefferson will not be anxious for peace. I only fear that alone he would give too much for it.

If this plan is thought liable to too strong objections—the next best thing is to send the commission of *ambassador extraordinary* to *Pinckney;* and send him also some *clever fellow* as secretary of embassy.

But I repeat it with extreme solicitude—another mission is absolutely indispensable.

On the subject of permitting our vessels to arm, there is some difficulty. You are right in the idea that merchant vessels under the convoy of ships of war, are exempt from search. But I know no book where it is to be found. Yet, I have so constantly understood it to be the usage, that I venture to rely upon it. But I believe the privilege is confined to *public ships* of war, and could not, according to usage, be transferred to private armed vessels. The measure must, therefore, be justified by the extremity.

Moreover, I understand no other consequence as resulting from the being armed, than that it exposes the vessel to confiscation for resisting a search. It is no breach of neutrality to permit the being armed.

But I would avoid the *formality* of a commission, and would substitute some *permit*, perhaps to be signed by the head of a department. This should be united with great precautions to prevent *abuse* by cruising, by driving *contraband trade* by transfers to foreigners.

At all events our trade must have protection. For our whole mercantile capital will else be destroyed, our seamen lost, and our country involved in extreme distress.

As to a provisional army, I reason thus:—no plan of a militia, which is not the equivalent, in other words, which is not under a positive engagement to constitute a *permanent army in case of invasion*, will be worth any thing. For we want a *stable* force created beforehand to oppose to the first torrent, which, with mere militia, would involve incalculable dangers and calamities. Hence, as a substitute for a standing army, I offer a provisional one. It would be composed thus:—the *officers* to be *appointed by the United States* and rank with those of the establishment, to receive some pay till called into actual service, say half, a third, or a fourth; those employed to *recruit* to be fully paid.

The men to be regularly *enlisted*, upon condition not to be called into actual service, *except in case of invasion*, and then to serve during the war; to receive a *uniform* coat, and a *dollar*, perhaps *two dollars* per month when not in the field—to be obliged to assemble for exercise so many days in the year, and then to

have full pay and rations. When called into actual service to have the same compensations, &c., with the establishment; in short, to become part of it. To be armed by the United States; to be liable from the beginning to the articles of war.

I think such a corps, from the *certainty of advantage*, and the *uncertainty of service*, might be engaged sooner than a standing force, and, with precautions in the enlistment, would be a solid resource in case of need.

I am much attached to the idea of a large corps of *efficient* cavalry; and I cannot allow this character to militia. It is all important to an undisciplined against a disciplined army. It is a species of force not easy to be brought by an invader—by which his supplies may be cut off, and his activity extremely checked. Were I to command an undisciplined army, I should prefer half the force with a good corps of cavalry to twice the force without one.

Yours truly.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

Saturday, May 13, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Mr. Goodhue takes on with him a Boston paper, the printer of which states that he has obtained, by a ship just arrived, a London paper of March 24th; mentioning in positive terms an account just received from the Emperor, that in consequence of a combination between Prussia and France, he is driven to the necessity of making an *immediate peace for the safety of the empire;* that in consequence of this, the king, who was at Windsor, had been sent for, &c., &c.

The manner of announcing it is too positive to allow much doubt that the thing is substantially true.

This intelligence confirms the expediency of a further attempt to *negotiate*, but I hope it will not carry us too far. A firm and erect countenance must be maintained, and the vigor of pre-

paration increased. Safety can only be found in uniting energy with moderation. Honor certainly is only to be found there; and either as a *man* or *citizen*, I, for one, had rather perish than submit to disgrace.

Yours, &c.

A. HAMILTON.

M'HENRY TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 14th May, 1797.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

I received your letters and papers. I added to them, but changed nothing, for the train of ideas in both ran in the same channel, and embraced the same objects.

The speech extenuates nought—recommends proper measures, promises a fresh attempt at negotiation, and declares the principles by which administration mean to be governed—in other words, that the President will follow the principles of the late administration.

It is not perhaps precisely such a speech as you would have written—a little too plain. It may, however, be better fitted on that account for the occasion.

Your affectionate, &c.

M'HENRY TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 15th May, 1797.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

I wrote you a line yesterday, acknowledging the receipt of your two letters from Albany.

I expect that there will be a quorum of both branches to-day.

It appears that the news of the Emperor of Germany having

signified his intention to make peace, was unfounded. Had it even been so, it ought to have augmented our endeavors to meet hostility.

It is probable that a new character will be given to Pinckney, and a secretary to the mission.

Yours, &c.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

June 5, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

The answer from the President to the Commander in Chief, &c., contains in the close a very indifferent passage. The sentiment is intemperate and revolutionary. It is not for us, particularly for the government, to breathe an irregular or violent spirit. Hitherto I have much liked the President's answers, as in the main within proper bounds, and calculated to animate and raise the public mind. But there are limits which must not be passed; and, from my knowledge of the ardor of the President's mind, and this specimen of the effects of that ardor, I begin to be apprehensive that he may run into indiscretion. This will do harm to the *government*, to the cause, and to himself. Some hint must be given, for we must make no *mistakes*.

Inclosed is a sketch of some ideas which have run through my mind; they are perhaps none of them new, but they are offered as the evidence of my opinion on the points. As yet, we are far short of the point of vigor.

HAMILTON TO KING.

June 6, 1797.

I thank you, my dear sir, for two letters lately received from you, the last by Mr. Church. I feel very guilty for my negligence. But how can I help it?

The public prints will inform you of the course of public proceedings hitherto. You will perceive that the general plan is analogous to what was done in the case of Great Britain, though there are faults in the detail. Some people cannot learn that the only force which befits a government is in the *thought* and *action*, not in the *words*, and many reverse the golden rule. I fear we shall do ourselves no honor in the result, and we shall remain at the mercy of events, without those efficient preparations which are demanded by so precarious situation; and which, not provoking war, would put us in condition to meet it. All the consolation I can give is, that the public temper of this country mends daily, and that there is no final danger of our submitting tamely to the yoke of France.

Yours affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

June 6th, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

You some time ago put a question to me which through hurry I never answered, viz.—whether there can be any distinction between the provision in the treaty with Great Britain respecting *British debts* and that respecting spoliations as to the power of the commissioners to rejudge the decisions of the courts. I answer that I can discover none.

I am of opinion, however, that in the exercise of this power two principles ought to be strenuously insisted upon. One—that

the commissioners ought not to intermeddle but when it is unequivocally ascertained that justice cannot be obtained through our courts. The other—that there ought to be no revision of the question of interest when abatements were made by juries undirected by any special statute. For it is certain that interest is capable of being affected by circumstances, and that the law leaves a considerable discretion on this point with juries. I take for granted also, that, where compromises were made between creditor and debtor without the intervention of courts, or the injunctions of positive law, there will be no revision. This is all a very delicate subject, one upon which great moderation on the part of the British commissioners is very important to future harmony.

I like very well the course of Executive conduct in regard to the controversy with France, and I like the answer of the Senate in regard to the President's speech.

But I confess, I have not been well satisfied with the answer reported in the House. It contains too many hard expressions; and hard words are very rarely useful in public proceedings. Mr. Jay and other friends here have been struck in the same manner with myself. We shall not regret to see the answer softened down. *Real firmness* is good for every thing. *Strut* is good for nothing.

Last session I sent Sedgwick, with request to communicate to you, my proposal of a building tax. Inclosed is the rough sketch. I do not know if there was any alteration in the copy sent to him.

But the more I reflect, the more I become convinced that some such plan ought to be adopted, and the idea of valuation dropped, and I have also become convinced that the idea of a tax on land ought to be deferred. The building tax can be accommodated to the quota-rule. For what were intended as rates may be considered as ratios of each individual tax, and then, as the *aggregate* of these ratios on a particular building, so will the sum to be raised by the State be the sum to be paid by the owner of that building, and so the very bad business of valuations may be avoided in general. In regard to stores, if they are

comprehended, rents or valuations may be adopted, and these rents may be represented by *ratios* equivalent to the proportion of the specific *ratios* to the rents of houses to be estimated in the law.

If these ideas are not clear I will on your advice give a further explanation.

My plan of *ways* and *means* then for the present would be:

A tax on buildings equal to	$1,000,000
On stamps, including a small percentage on policies of insurance and a percentage on collateral successions, . . .	500,000
A duty on hats, say 5 per cent. for the commonest kind, 10 per cent. for the middling, and 20 for the best, to be decided by the materials.	
On saddle horses —— dollars per horse, .	150,000
On salt, so much as will make the whole duty 25 cents—suppose, . . .	350,000
	$2,000,000

I should like also a remodification of the duties on licenses to sell spirituous liquors by multiplying discriminations.

I would then open a loan for 5,000,000 of dollars, to be repaid absolutely within *five years*, upon which I would allow a high interest, say 8 per cent., payable quarterly, and redeemable *at pleasure* by paying off, and I would accept subscriptions as low as $100. In case of pressure, Treasury bills having a like interest may be used.

If unfortunately war break out, then every practicable object of taxation should at once be seized hold of, so as to carry our revenue in the first instance to the extent of our ability. Nor is the field narrow.

I give you my ideas full gallop and without management of expression. I hope you always understand me right, as they are intended in the spirit of friendly frankness.

Yours very truly,

A. HAMILTON.

A million of dollars per annum on buildings and lands on the following plan.

1st. Upon inhabited dwelling-houses thus:—

Upon every such house of the denomination and description of a log house, at the rate of 20 cents for each room or apartment thereof, exclusive of garret and cellar.

Upon every other inhabited dwelling-house of two rooms or apartments, exclusive of halls or entries, garrets and cellars, at the rate of 25 cents for each room or apartment.

Upon every such house of three rooms or apartments, exclusive as before, at the rate of 33⅓ cents for each room or apartment.

Upon every such house of four rooms, exclusive as before, at the rate of 40 cents for each room or apartment.

Upon every such house of five rooms, exclusive as before, at the rate of 60 cents for each room or apartment.

Upon every such house of six rooms, exclusive as before, at the rate of 75 cents for each room or apartment thereof.

Upon every such house of seven rooms and upwards, at the rate of 100 cents for each room, &c.

Remarks.—These rates have been adjusted by applying their operation to a number of houses, from which it appears that they find a sufficiently exact proportion to the rent, and they avoid the expense and uncertainty of valuation. Other circumstances of discrimination, if thought advised, may be added.

Upon every room in a garret or cellar of a house of the foregoing descriptions, having a fireplace, and upon any kitchen, whether in a cellar or adjacent building, at the rate of 20 cents for each room or kitchen.

Upon each room or apartment of every such house painted inside, the further sum of 25 cents.

Upon each room or apartment of such house papered inside, or painted and bordered with paper, the further sum of 50 cents.

Upon every chimney, faced with tiles or cut stone other than marble, the further sum of 50 cents.

Upon every chimney faced with marble, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every stair-case of cedar or ebony wood, the further sum of 50 cents.

Upon every stair-case of mahogany wood, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every room or apartment with stucco cornices, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every room with a stucco ceiling, the further sum of 200 cents; but the same room shall not also be rated for cornices of such work.

Upon every such house with pillars or pilasters outside in front, the further sum of 100 cents.

Upon every such house faced outside and in front, in whole or in part with marble, the further sum of 200 cents.

These rates to be paid by the occupiers of the house, whether owners or tenants. When a house is let by parcels the landlord to be deemed the occupier.

Upon all stone houses not being parts of dwelling houses in use, at the rate of one-fortieth part of the yearly value, to be determined by the actual rent if rented, and if not by an estimate or valuation thereof.

Upon all grist-mills, at the rate of 125 cents for each run of stone therein.

Upon all saw-mills, at the rate of 50 cents for each saw usually worked therein, not exceeding three, and for each saw above that number 25 cents.

Upon all wharves in the cities and towns of Portsmouth, Boston, &c., (enumerating the principal towns,) at the rate of 12½ cents for each foot in front thereof.

Upon all wharves in any other city or town at the rate of 6 cents.

Remarks.—Or this may be thrown into classes.

Upon all lumber yards in the cities or towns of Portsmouth, Boston, &c. (enumerating the principal towns,) at the rate of 2½ cents for each hundred square feet.

Cottages inhabited by paupers to be excepted, to be judged of and ascertained by the assessors hereinafter described.

The amount of the foregoing taxes in each State, to be ascertained within a time to be limited by law for that purpose by the assessors, and a report thereof to be made to the Treasury, which shall then proceed to apportion, according to the prescribed quota, the sum remaining to make up the million of dollars to be levied.

For example, suppose there were five States, and the product of the house-tax of each as follows:

A.	$100,000.
B.	150,000.
C.	200,000.
D.	50,000.
E.	100.000.
	$600,000.

There would then remain towards the million to be levied on lands $400,000. Let there be then assigned to each State so much in land-tax as together with its house-tax will equal the *

Remarks.—The mode of ascertaining to be by an actual calling at each house, and receiving of the occupiers a list of the particulars which are criterions of the tax; the officer to have power to administer an oath.

A proper penalty to be annexed to misrepresentation, and a power to be given upon cause of suspicion testified on oath, to issue a warrant to inspect the house for ascertaining the fact. This will reconcile the idea of the sanctity of the castle with the security of the revenue.

* The paper is incomplete.

WILLIAMS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 7th June, 1797.

SIR:

We shall be this day engaged on the subject of regulating the arming of merchantmen. A difficulty ariseth with me respecting the construction of our treaty with France. Our vessels will claim a right as the treaty with France expresseth. The French will exact the decree of 2d March last. Hence, both will be authorized by their respective nations, and which will be diametrically opposite each other.

Again, Victor Hugo has declared all American vessels taken armed shall be treated as pirates.

Thus, while on the one hand our commerce suffers, and on the other it is susceptible of commencing a misunderstanding which will probably lead to a war—which ought to be avoided—no talk of embargo—only giving the Executive the power in case of emergency.

We shall direct the completion of fortifications, but believe will only order the frigates finished, and probably manned.

Do not believe we shall purchase vessels for war, or order convoys.

As it (in my opinion) behoves us to act with caution, till we learn the event of the negotiation, I am at present for pursuing the same measures as in the year 1794.

Should the negotiation fail, and France not be satisfied with being put on an equal footing with other nations—we shall be unanimous in our opposition.

Any remarks on these subjects, or any other, will be thankfully received by your humble servant,

JOHN WILLIAMS.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

June 8, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your two letters of the sixth and seventh. The last announced to me no more than I feared. Nor do I believe any sufficient external impulse can be given to save us from *disgrace*. This, however, will be thought of.

I regret that you appear remote from the idea of a house tax simply, without combining the land. I do not differ from your general principle. The truth is, a solid one, that the sound state of the political economy depends, in a great degree, on a general repartition of taxes on taxable property, by some equal rule. But it is very important to relax in theory, so as to accomplish as much as may be practicable. I despair of a general land tax, without actual war. I fear the idea of it; it keeps men back from the augmentation of revenue by other means which they might be willing to adopt. The idea of a house tax alone, is not so formidable. If placed upon a footing which would evince practicability and moderation in the sum, I think it might succeed. Now one million of dollars, computing the number of houses at six hundred thousand, would be an average of about a dollar and a half. The tax would be very *low* on the worst houses, and could not be *high* on the best. This idea would smooth a great deal.

As to the circumstance of the habitations of the southern negroes, I see no improbable difficulty in applying ratios to them, which would tend to individual equity. As between the States, the quota principle would make this point unimportant.

As to the inequality in certain States, I believe, on the plan suggested, there could be no general tax which in fact would operate more equally. The idea of equalization by embracing lands, does not much engage my confidence. Besides that, this may be an after-object, and we are to gain points successively.

As to the productiveness of the stamp tax, with the items I suggest, it is difficult, in the first instance, to judge. But I am

persuaded it would go far towards the point aimed at. There cannot be much fewer than three millions of hats consumed in a year in this country. At an average of eight cents per hat, this would be two hundred and forty thousand dollars; a large proportion of the five hundred thousand dollars. If law proceedings can be included, directly or indirectly, the produce will be very considerable. I think you mistake when you say these taxes in England are inconsiderable in proportion. According to my recollection, the reverse is the truth.

Adieu.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, June 27, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

Lord Malmesbury will leave London in three or four days for Lisle, where the conferences between this country and France are to be held. Opinions fluctuate concerning the probability of peace. A struggle evidently exists in France between the Directory and the Legislature; in the latter of which bodies, it is supposed, there is a sincere desire of peace.

Some late proceedings in the Legislature, or rather in the Council of Five Hundred, give occasion to hope that our affairs are in train to assume a more friendly appearance.

If, as many assert, the public opinion is friendly to America, it will be employed by the Legislature against the Directory, which at this moment is viewed as a rival power. We have just received the President's speech; it has arrived at a critical hour. You will perceive by the newspapers that all Italy will be overturned. Venice is no more; and Genoa has been completely revolutionized by citizen Faypoult, the minister of France.

Portugal sees, but seems unable to escape her fate.

Though these are days of wonder, still one dares not believe all we hear. The march already made by France has astonished and confounded almost every beholder—and we are

told that she meditates and will attempt projects still more gigantic than those she has executed—plans which will operate a change in the whole face of Europe, and which extend to every other quarter of the globe. Russia may be able to preserve her dominions from the fire that is passing over the neighboring countries. This nation has lately renewed her commercial treaty with Russia, and by an arrangement of their mutual interests may strengthen their common defence. It may be worth remarking, that during this negotiation Russia never even proposed the project of the armed neutrality, so that the omission of the requisite provisions on that subject may be considered as an abandonment of the system by Russia.

Russia is to be treated in the British ports upon the same footing as the most favored European nation. Farewell.

Yours, etc.

CHURCH TO HAMILTON.

July 13th, 1797.

Frauncis told me that Giles, Madison, and Findley, had frequent meetings at his brother's house, and that they used a variety of persuasions to prevail on him to accuse you of being concerned with Reynolds in speculation of certificates. I suppose Munroe will be at Philadelphia to-morrow, and I think, from what I observed yesterday, that he is inclined to be very gentle, and that he is much embarrassed how to get out of the scrape in which he has involved himself.

JOHN BARKER CHURCH.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, August 6th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

No satisfactory opinion can yet be formed concerning the termination of the negotiations for peace. Even those who are supposed to have the best information are without confidence. On the one hand, peace may be concluded sooner than any one thinks probable; on the other, the negotiations at Lisle and at Montebello, may be suddenly broken off, and France again engaged with Austria, as well as England. A great struggle, in which all Europe think themselves interested, exists between the two Councils and a majority of the Directory, for it is well understood that almost every question is decided in this latter body by three against two. If the Councils prevail, peace is believed to be more probable; if the war continues, Denmark and the neighboring free cities, Portugal, perhaps Switzerland, and even Greece, as well as the whole of Italy, will be revolutionized. I wish I could write to you with the same freedom as we could converse. How far the new order of things is to extend, which are still to be overturned, and who are to be spared, is a subject concerning which we may amuse ourselves with conjectures. It would be a consolation could we any where discover a mind of adequate foresight and authority, to influence, combine, and apply to their proper and legitimate uses, the disposition and the means which unquestionably exist to resist and baffle the monstrous force which overturns, and will continue to lay waste every country against which it bends its energies. Paradoxical as it may appear, the people are less wrong than their governments, which, every where, seem to be destitute of both wisdom and courage. I cannot except even the government of this country, which possessing the command of the resources of the richest nation in Europe, with a clear and distinct view of the total insecurity of any compromise with their enemy, still dismounts and lowers the national spirit and courage by fruitless and repeated efforts to restore peace. Men

are mortal, and by a law to which they are subject can exist but for a limited time. Societies are exempt from this law, and there is nothing in their nature that limits their improvement, in duration; still the analogy is but too strict, and we seem to be doomed to witness, if not to suffer, in the dissolution of the present social organization.

Farewell. When I am able to give you a gayer prospect I will write you again.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, August 21st, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Not for any intrinsic value the thing possesses, but as a token of my sincere regard and friendship for you, and as a remembrance of me, I pray you to accept a wine cooler for four bottles, which Colonel Biddle is directed to forward from Philadelphia, (where with other articles it was left,) together with this letter to your address. It is one of four which I imported in the early part of my late administration of the government; two only of which were ever used.

I pray you to present my best wishes, in which Mrs. Washington joins me, to Mrs. Hamilton and the family; and that you would be persuaded, that with every sentiment of the highest regard,

I remain your sincere friend,
And affectionate humble servant,
GEO. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

August 27, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

Some time since I received the inclosed, being directions concerning measures requisite to be pursued to obtain indemnification in cases of capture by British cruisers. I laid it by in haste, and have since overlooked it. I do not recollect to have seen it in the newspapers, and yet it appeared to me necessary that it should be so. As it came to me from some one of our public characters in London, I presume you must have received the equivalent. I am curious to know if this has been the case, and if any thing has been done upon it.

After perusal, and making such use ———— as you may think proper, you will oblige me by returning it.

Yours truly, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, August 28, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

The receipt two days since of your letter of the 21st inst., gave me sincere pleasure. The token of your regard which it announces, is very precious to me, and will always be remembered as it ought to be.

Mrs. Hamilton has lately added another boy to our stock; she and the child are both well. She desires to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Washington and yourself.

We have nothing new here more than our papers contain, but are anxiously looking forward to a further development of the negotiations in Europe, with an ardent desire for general accommodation. It is at the same time agreeable to observe, that the public mind is adopting, more and more, sentiments truly American, and free from foreign tincture.

I beg my best respects to Mrs. Washington, and that you will always be assured of the most respectful and affectionate attachment of, dear Sir, &c.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, September 9th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

We have this day accounts from Paris, which, though very important and interesting, are not unexpected. The breach between the Councils and the Directory has for some time destroyed all prospect of a reconciliation between them; and either an organized civil war, in consequence of the different sides adopted by the several armies, or a measure like that which has happened, had become inevitable. The march of a considerable division of the army into the interior, the removals of generals in whom they did not confide, the various messages in the style of manifestoes addressed to the Councils, and the sending for General Jourdan, who commanded the army of the Rhine, to Paris, and putting his army in the interim of his absence under Hoche, are now explained.

Augereau, who had been called from Italy for the purpose, upon the alarm-cannon being fired on the morning of the 4th instant, marched his troops, and surrounded, without opposition, the place of sitting of the Council of 500. He then proceeded to arrest Pichegru, and a considerable number of the other most influential members of that Council, on the charge of a royalist conspiracy; having for its object the massacre of three of the Directory, to make way for successors who would place Louis XVIII. on the throne of France. Carnot, say the same advices, has fled; and Barthelemy, say others, is also arrested. I do not give you this account as authentic, though I have little doubt that it is so, as far, at least, as it states an attack of the Directory upon the Council of 500.

If the consequence of this proceeding was confined to France, it would be less the subject of regret, though all must deplore the sanguinary scenes so frequently there exhibited; but in reference to the pending negotiations and the return of peace, this transaction is very important. The two Councils, who, in this respect, are supposed to have faithfully represented their constituents, desired peace with sincerity; the Directory most certainly differed from them in their inclinations on this subject. If the Directory overwhelm the Councils, the war must, and will continue. But how will the armies—how will the nations conduct on this occasion? I fear there is little consolation to the friends of humanity from the doubt, which for a moment exists on these points—the nations are nothing, the armies are most probably secured, and the Directory will triumph. Adieu.

Yours, &c.

P. S. If I do not forget names, a majority of the committee to whom Pastoret's speech on our affairs was referred, are among the members now arrested. You will readily see how mischievous to us this success of the Directory may and probably will be.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

Mount Vernon, 8th October, 1797.

My Dear Sir:

The ardent desire which Mr. La Fayette feels to embrace his parents and sisters in the first moments of their liberation, induces him to set out for New-York, or further eastward, in search of a passage to France.

It was my opinion, that he had better have awaited authentic accounts of this event; but his eagerness to see his friends—the fear of a winter passage, and a conviction that he is under no predicament that would render his reception in France at all

embarrassing to him, even if he should be disappointed in meeting his friends there, has prevailed.

I am sure it is unnecessary that I should recommend him and Mr. Frestel to your civilities, while they may be detained in New-York, or to your aid in procuring them a passage to France; but I will request, if circumstances should call for greater pecuniary means than they possess, that you would be so good as to furnish them, and draw upon me for the amount, and it shall be paid at sight.

Present Mrs. Washington and myself in the most affectionate manner to Mrs. Hamilton, and be assured always of the very high esteem and regard with which I am yours,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO M'HENRY.

February 18, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Yours of yesterday, with its inclosure, are come to hand, and will be attended to as speedily as possible.

I take the liberty to trouble you with the inclosed to receive the amount (which, though the accumulated interest on all my stock from the beginning of the funding system, will be short of 200 dollars). When received pay yourself one hundred; our friend Lewis, seven; and deliver the rest to Wolcott, who has lately been paying for some books for me.

This idea draws my attention to the little object, as the sum is not worth retaining, it has induced me to make sale of the principal to Le Roy Bayard and McEvers. While at the notary's, and not having previously consulted them, I put your name in the power to transfer the stock. This power they will send you. Pray, comply with it, and excuse the almost *indecorum* on my part.

Yours truly, &c.

SMITH TO HAMILTON.

February 14, 1798.

SIR:

The New-York Society for promoting the Manumission of Slaves, at their stated meeting in January last, directed the reference of the two following articles (of a report then made to them by their committee on the circular address of the last convention) to the counsellors of the society.

"Article 1st. To transmit copies to the ensuing convention, of any laws relative to slaves, which may be enacted by the legislature of this State, previous to the session of the said convention, and since the convention of 1797."

Article 5th (of the report). "To give information to the convention of the exertions, and of their issue, which have been made by this society, to obtain a repeal or amelioration of the laws relative to slaves."

The report represents these as duties to be fulfilled by the society; which they have accordingly determined to execute, and for this purpose have ordered this reference to their counsellors, who are further directed "to prepare their report thereon, with all convenient dispatch; and, when prepared, to deliver it over to such persons as may hereafter be chosen to represent the society in the convention, to be held in June, 1798."

The other members of the counsel of the society, of which you are first named, are Peter Jay Munro, William Johnson, and Martin S. Wilkins, Esquires.

I am respectfully yours,

E. H. SMITH, Secretary.

HAMILTON TO KING.

[Probably March, 1798.]

It is a great while, my dear friend, since I have written to you a line. You will not, I am sure, impute my silence to any cause impeaching my friendship, for that must be always cordial and entire. The truth is, that my professional avocations occupy me to the extent of the exertions my health permit, and I have been unwilling to sit down to write you without leisure to say something interesting. But I now depart from the rule, that my persevering silence may not make me sin beyond redemption. I have, however, only time to tell you that your friends are generally well, and as much attached to you as ever; and that I hear of no cabals against you.

Being just returned from Albany, I would say nothing about the political juncture as it is affected by the unpleasant advices from our commissioners in France. I will only say, that the public mind is much sounder than that of our representatives in the national council, and that there is no danger of our entirely disgracing ourselves—that is, by any unworthy compliances with the exorbitant pretensions of "The Great MONSTER."*

Yours affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

NEW-YORK, March 17th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I make no apology for offering you my opinion on the present state of our affairs.

I look upon the question before the public as nothing less than whether we shall maintain our independence; and I am

* Soi-disant, "The Great Nation."

prepared to do it in every event, and at every hazard. I am therefore of opinion, that our Executive should come forth on this basis.

I wish to see a *temperate*, but *grave*, *solemn*, and *firm* communication from the President to the two Houses on the result of the advices from our commissioners; this communication to review summarily the course of our affairs with France from the beginning to the present moment; to advert to her conduct towards the neutral powers generally, dwelling emphatically on the last decree respecting vessels carrying British manufactures, as an unequivocal act of hostility against all of them; to allude to the dangerous and vast projects of the French government; to consider her refusal to receive our ministers as a virtual denial of our independence, and as evidence that, if circumstances favor the plan, we shall be called to defend that independence, our political institutions, and our liberty, against her enterprises; to conclude, that leaving still the door to accommodation open, and not proceeding to final rupture, our duty, our honor, and safety, require that we shall take vigorous and comprehensive measures of defence, adequate to the immediate protection of our commerce, to the security of our ports, and to our eventual defence in case of invasion, and with a view to these great objects, calling forth and organizing all the resources of the country. I would, at the same time, have the President to recommend a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. The occasion renders it proper, and religious ideas will be useful. I have this last measure at heart.

The measures to be advocated by our friends in Congress to be these:

I. Permission to our merchant vessels to arm and to capture those which may attack them.

II. The completion of our frigates, and the provision of a considerable number of sloops-of-war not exceeding twenty guns. Authority to capture all attacking, and privateers found within twenty leagues of our coast.

III. Power to the President, in general terms, to provide and equip ten ships of the line in case of open rupture with any foreign power.

IV. The increase of our military establishment to twenty thousand, and a provisional army of thirty thousand, besides the militia.

V. The efficacious fortification of our principal ports, say, Portsmouth, Boston, Newport, New London, New-York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Baltimore, Wilmington, N. C., Charleston, Savannah. It is waste of money to be more diffusive.

VI. The extension of our revenue to all the principal objects of taxation, and a loan commensurate with the contemplated expenditures.

VII. The *suspension* of our treaties with France till a basis of connection shall be re-established by treaty.

In my opinion, bold language and bold measures are indispensable. The attitude of *calm defiance* suits us. It is vain to talk of peace with a power with which we are actually in hostility. The election is between a tame surrender of our rights or a state of mitigated hostility. Neither do I think that this state will lead to general rupture, if France is unsuccessful; and if successful, there is no doubt in my mind, that she will endeavor to impose her yoke upon us.

Yours, with true esteem,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. If Robert Troup resigns his office of district judge, the President cannot make a better choice than of Samuel Jones, Esq., the present Comptroller of the State. I understand he will accept.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

[Post-marked March 28, 1798.]

MY DEAR SIR:

I understand that the Senate have called upon the President for papers. Nothing certainly can be more proper; and such is

the universal opinion here; and it appears to me essential that so much as possibly can, be communicated. Confidence will otherwise be wanting, and criticism will ensue which it will be difficult to repel. The observation is, that Congress are called upon to discharge the most important of all their functions, and that it is too much to expect that they will rely on the influence of the Executive from materials which may be put before them. The recent examples of the British King are cited. Pray let all that is possible be done.

Yours truly, &c.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 25th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

The inclosed I wrote last evening for your information. This morning I received your *open* letter of the 23d. As soon as a vessel shall be dispatched for France with letters of recall to our envoys, I presume the President will communicate their letters to Congress, whether demanded or not. If the envoys, or any of them, should be found in France (of which there is a bare possibility), they are to demand their passports and return, unless they shall have concluded a treaty, or are actually in treaty with persons vested with equal powers, and that the treaty proceeds with candor on the part of the French government.

This vessel will probably sail the ensuing Thursday.

What shall we say to the British government? You hint at nothing. The opposition party have often insinuted that a treaty, offensive and defensive, has doubtless been already concluded with Great Britain. A friend of mine yesterday told me that he was asked if such a treaty had not arrived. The truth is, that not one syllable has been written to Mr. King, or any one else, upon the subject. I confess it to have been for some time my opinion, that provisional orders should be sent to Mr. King. Mr.

King, in one of his latest letters, desires to be particularly instructed. The dispatch boat may be directed to go from France to England with such instructions (which will be in cypher), or may go directly to Falmouth, and there may ascertain whether our envoys are or are not in France. Your ideas communicated to me on this subject, and on the facts stated in the inclosed, will be highly acceptable to me. I wish to receive them on Wednesday.

Very truly and respectfully yours, &c.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 25th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I duly received your letter of the 17th. No apology will be necessary for a communication of your opinion at any time, and at the present crisis your opinion is particularly acceptable.

Prior to the receipt of your letter, the President had determined to recommend the observance of a general fast, and had desired one or both the chaplains of Congress to prepare the draft of a proclamation. This has since been issued.

The idea of a solemn and firm communication from the President to the two Houses of Congress on the state of our affairs with France, had occurred to me, with this addition, that it might be more impressive if delivered personally by the President himself from the speaker's chair, as at the opening of a session; that this speech should comprehend as brief a statement of our relations to France as would consist with an adequate representation of our *good faith*, and of her *perfidy and hostile acts* from the commencement of the French Revolution to the present moment. This paper should be prepared by me. I wish I were able to do full justice to the subject. A proper time to deliver this communication would be when the letters from our envoys should be laid before Congress; for a motion has been made in

the Senate for that purpose, and it is expected a like motion will be made in the House; but, independently of these motions, it is really desirable that not Congress only, but the people at large, should know the conduct of the French government towards our envoys, and the abominable corruption of that government, together with their enormous demands for money. These are so monstrous as to shock every reasonable man when he shall know them. It was pretended that the Directory was rashly exasperated against the American government for some expressions in the President's speech to Congress on the 16th of May last, and that those expressions, or their application to the government of France, must be *disavowed*. This, however, was a bold pretence, only as the means of extorting money. Yes; for after it had been said, that the *Directory, for its own honor and the honor of the Republic*, would insist on this reparation, our envoys were plainly told that there was a practicable substitute, *more valuable than both*. They asked what? Money! money! was the answer. This reparation, when it should be made, was only paving the way for new, and, I may say, unlimited demands for more money, —a sum equal to all the spoliations of the French on our commerce. To enable the Republic to pay our merchants? No! for the present use of the Republic. Then a mode might be agreed on for the liquidation of the merchant claims, to be compensated at some future period; and in the mean time, until the treaty should be concluded (which that government might procrastinate indefinitely), their depredations were not to be restrained. Besides this, we must purchase promptly thirty-two millions of Dutch inscriptions (12,800,000 dollars) at par, and rely on the existence and ability of the Batavian Republic to redeem them. The sum of all was, in the words of the agent, "Il faut de l'argent, il faut beaucoup d'argent;" and, without this, our envoys were explicitly told by the secret but unofficial agents, that, if they remained in Paris six months longer, they would not advance one step.

You will be aware that I communicate these important facts to you *in perfect confidence*, for as you interest yourself so deeply in public affairs, and are so obliging as to communicate your opinions,

I thought you should be possessed of facts. I communicate them of myself without the privity of any one.

Yet after all these inadmissible demands, and the peremptory declaration with which I closed the above detail, the envoys meant to make one more formal application by letter to Talleyrand on the 10th of January, two days after their last letter to me, which you have seen was communicated to Congress, and in which they say "there existed no hope of their being officially received or in any way accomplishing the object of their mission." These objects they meant to state, and discuss, as if they had been formally received. There is but one solution of this measure of the envoys, and of their long suffering patience in their mortifying situation: to convince all their countrymen that it was not *possible* to adjust our differences with the present government of France. We do not know the result of this intended application, nor whether the envoys have left France; and it is these uncertainties which prevented the President's displaying this scene of insults, extortion, ambition, and iniquity, by communicating the envoys' letters before Congress and the country.

I must assure you further, that Portugal *purchased* her peace, that the very money paid by her in hand enabled the triumvirs, in the Directory, to march troops and effect the Revolution of September 4th; and yet, the day after they received their intelligence of the peace finally concluded with the Emperor, these same villains declared the Portuguese treaty void. Doubtless, they now demand more money to renew it than Portugal can conveniently muster, and probably nothing would satisfy the monsters short of the riches of Lisbon and the pillage of the churches, and the subversion of the kingdom. Then will come the turn of Spain, of whom they have demanded the cession of Louisiana, and pressed their demand until the Prince of Peace knows not how any longer to resist it; and in order to plunder Spain and subvert the monarchy—unprincipled men will not want pretences—perhaps this will be sufficient—that Spain has not contributed as she ought to the common warfare as an ally bound by a league offensive as well as defensive.

What ought we to do in respect to *Louisiana?* A letter

this day received from Colonel Humphreys, dated at Madrid the 4th of January, renders it probable that the information we have had from New Orleans is true, that Gayoso has received order to evacuate the posts. His information (Colonel Humphreys's), was from a man employed in a public office conversant in American affairs, and Colonel Humphreys considered it *almost certain*. Perhaps these orders may have resulted from Spain's seeing or fearing the necessity of ceding Louisiana to France, and hence concluding that she might as well do a grateful thing to us before the surrender. Louisiana is easy to be defended by a force commanding the Mississippi at its mouth, another at the *English turn* (half way between New Orleans and the mouth of the river), and at the entrance from the sea into the lake Pontchartrain. The Spanish force in all Louisiana is small, probably not rising to a thousand men, from the Balize to the Missouri. The deepest channel of the three mouths of the Mississippi does not exceed fifteen feet of water, and it requires a pretty strong breeze to advance against the current.

I have one more important fact to mention. That since Lord Malmesbury's negotiation was broken off by the French, that government has offered more advantageous terms to the British administration than Lord Malmesbury demanded, on the single condition of a *douceur* of *one million sterling*, to be divided among the Directory and the ministers. Talleyrand's share was to be one hundred thousand pounds sterling for his department. I might have mentioned that these miscreants had the modesty to ask of our envoys a douceur of but fifty thousand pounds sterling. Merlin was to have no part of the fifty thousand, because the privateersmen had paid him liberally for his opinions against our vessels and those of other neutrals. This reminds me of another very important omission in my preceding details. In regard to the adjustment of our claims for spoliations, all the vessels condemned for want of the rôle d'équipage were not to be brought into view. Their condemnations were to be admitted as irrevocable, because Merlin had written a treatise to justify their condemnation. Were there ever such devils out of pandemonium? There was afterwards some relaxation on

this point. Claims might be made for such vessels, and if Citizen Merlin could be convinced they were just, why then they might be considered.

Of the measures you recommend.

1st. Permission to arm merchant vessels is given by the President's withdrawing his restrictions; but there should be a law to regulate them. The opposition are very angry with the President's act on this point.

2d. The frigates are to be completed; but the providing of a number of sloops of war will be vehemently opposed.

3d. To authorize the President to provide ten ships of the line would be still more opposed. I have supposed they might easily be obtained of Great Britain, and that even for the bare act of victualing such a fleet by us, the British would keep one on our coast; and perhaps subject them to our orders, the British minister concurring, but to command them fully, they must be our own.

4th. There would be equal opposition to increase of our military establishment.

5th. There would perhaps be little opposition to a better, perhaps to a formidable fortifying of our principal forts. Where are the engineers? The Frenchmen in general employed in 1794, only wasted our money. Almost any artillery officer of our revolutionary army would probably do better. Colonel Vincent's plans at New-York are probably a fortunate exception.

6th. The revenue will not be extended but on the adoption of the defensive measures, that will make additional revenues indispensable.

7th. Instead of a *suspension*, I have for some time thought we should declare the *annihilation* of all our treaties with France. The repeated infractions of them on her part would justify us in making void the whole.

A disclosure of our actual situation with France by communicating the envoys' letters, would, I presume, detach so many of the adherents to opposition leaders, as to enable the real friends to their country to take promptly all the requisite measures. On these details favor me with your opinions.

Truly and respectfully yours, &c.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

10 o'clock, Tuesday, March 27, 1798.

My Dear Sir:

I have this moment received your two favors of the 25th. I am delighted with their contents; but it is impossible for me to reply particularly to them so as to reach you to-morrow, as you desire. I will, therefore, confine myself to one point. I am against going immediately into alliance with Great Britain. It is my opinion that her interests will insure us her coöperation to the extent of her power, and that a treaty will not secure her further. On the other hand, a treaty might entangle us. Public opinion is not prepared for it. It would not fail to be represented as to the *point to which our previous conduct was directed;* and, in case of offers from France, satisfactory to us, the public faith might be embarrassed by the calls of the people for accommodation and peace.

The *desideratum* is, that Britain could be engaged to lodge with her *minister here*, powers commensurate with such arrangements as exigencies may require, and the progress of opinion permit. I see no good objection on her part to this plan.

It would be good policy in her to send to this country a dozen frigates, to pursue the directions of this government.

If *Spain* would cede Louisiana to the United States, I would accept it absolutely, if obtainable absolutely; or with an engagement to *restore*, if it cannot be obtained absolutely. I shall write again to-morrow.

Yours truly, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

Philadelphia, April 5th, 1798.

The papers relative to the negotiation which has been attempted with France have been laid before Congress. Many in

both Houses, I believe, find that the gratification of their curiosity has made them responsible for the management of a pretty difficult subject. The disclosure was, I suppose, necessary, though I regret the necessity. The dose will kill or cure, and I wish I was not uncertain which; not that I doubt the expediency of what the government has done or attempted, but because I believe faction and Jacobinism to be the natural and immortal enemies of our system. It is some satisfaction, however, to know that the instructions and the conduct of the President generally in this affair, have extorted the reluctant approbation of our most inveterate opposers. A few days will determine whether our Legislature can act with that decision and energy which the crisis demands. Nothing further by way of impression can be done, except recourse is had to the desperate and doubtful remedy of a popular appeal.

The revenue does not decline so much as I expected; but the management of the Treasury becomes more and more difficult. The Legislature will not pass laws in gross. Their appropriations are minute. Gallatin, to whom they yield, is evidently intending to break down this department, by charging it with an impracticable detail.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 9, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

This morning the dispatches from our envoys are published, and I inclose a copy.

In your letter of March 27th, in answer to mine of the 25th, just then received, you say, "I shall write again to-morrow." I have received no letter from you since that of the 27th, which I mention on the presumption that you may have written, and because, if you have, it is important on every account that it should be known.

You will readily imagine what apologies our internal enemies make for the French government. Jefferson says that the Directory are not implicated in the villany and corruption displayed in these dispatches, or, at least, that these offer no proof against them. Bache's paper of last Saturday says, "that M. Talleyrand is notoriously anti-republican, that he was the intimate friend of Mr. Hamilton, Mr. King, and other great federalists, and that it is probably owing to the determined hostility which he discovered in them towards France, that the government of that country consider us only as objects of plunder."

I am very truly yours, &c.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, 19th April, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have this instant received a letter dated the 14th instant, from Judge Hobart, resigning his seat in the Senate of the United States; and as our Legislature is not now in session, it hath become my duty to appoint a Senator to succeed him, and take his place, until the next meeting of the Legislature.

The present delicate state of our public affairs, and the evident expediency of filling this vacancy without delay, induce me, without requesting your permission and waiting for your answer to determine, to send you a commission to fill that place by the next post.

I can say nothing that will not occur to you. Adieu.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN JAY.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, 19th April, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote a few lines this morning, informing you that Judge Hobart had resigned his seat in the Senate, and that by the next post I should send you a commission to fill his place. On further reflection, I doubt the propriety of appointing you without your previous permission, and therefore shall postpone it until I receive your answer.

If, after well considering the subject, you should decline an appointment, be so good as to consult with some of our most judicious friends, and advise me as to the person most proper to appoint, and at the same time likely to accept.

Yours sincerely.

HAMILTON TO JAY.

NEW-YORK, April 24, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your two favors of the 19th instant. I feel as I ought the mark of confidence they announce. But I am obliged by my situation to decline the appointment. This situation you are too well acquainted with to render it necessary for me to enter into explanation. There may arrive a crisis when I may conceive myself bound once more to sacrifice the interests of my family to public call. But I must defer the change as long as possible.

I do not at present think of a person to recommend adapted to the emergency. I shall reflect, and consult, and write you by the next post. This, the first day, is not decisive of our election here, but there is as yet nothing to discourage.

With respect and attachment,

I remain, dear Sir, &c.

Governor Jay.

ROBERT G. HARPER TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 27, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Could any thing prevail on you to take the War Department? Reflect on the importance of the station at this moment. Consider how much more important a war minister is than a general, and how much more difficult to be found.

We shall have an army of twenty thousand men, with the power to receive voluntary enlistments *ad libitum* in addition to it—the volunteers to be armed and clothed at their own expense. This, under proper direction, will give us the flower of the country; and put arms into the hands of all our friends. But every thing will depend on the *name* of the general and the *talents* of the minister.

I write this without any authority, but I have good reason to believe from late conversations with the President, that if he were to understand your willingness to come forward, the arrangement would immediately take place. In that case Mr. McHenry would give way, and there is no difference of opinion among the federal party on the absolute necessity of his doing so.

General Pinckney and Carrington, of Virginia, have been thought of among our friends, if you cannot be got: but the first is absent, and the second wants the weight of character requisite at this time. Besides, he may be more fit for the marine, where also will be wanted a man of authority and detail.

M'HENRY TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 12th May, 1798.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

I shall in a short time be able to get to sea one or two of our frigates, and perhaps, in less than six or seven days, Capt. Dale,

in the Ganges, a lately purchased vessel. Can you spare an hour or two to help me to the instructions that it will be proper to give to their Captains. Our ships of war, it is probable, will meet with French privateers, who may be in possession of our merchantmen, or with our merchant vessels having French prize-masters on board; or, with French privateers cruising upon our coast to capture American vessels. They may also, when acting as convoys, be obliged to employ force to protect their convoys, and may even be obliged to board a French ship of war to terminate a contest, and insure its safety. What instructions ought to be given to meet such cases, or enable them to afford competent protection to our merchantmen, and preserve the Executive from any future accusation of having, by its orders, involved the country in war? I foresee these instructions will fall to my lot, there being no chance that we shall have a Secretary of the Navy in time to frame them, or release me from the responsibility. Neither the President has mentioned the subject yet to me, or any other gentleman. You will easily conceive how necessary it is I should be assisted with your ideas, and a sketch of such instructions, as in your opinion, will comport with the existing state of things and profound reserve of Congress.

Yours sincerely and affectionately.

KING TO HAMILTON.

London, May 12th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

It will not surprise you to hear that an open schism, accompanied by mutual reproaches, took place between our envoys before they separated. Mr. Gerry remains at Paris, and there is a strong opinion that great pains will be taken to persuade him to consent to a public reception, in order to deceive and mock his country with overtures of an insidious negotiation. Marshall and Pinckney left Paris about the middle of April. The former,

I hope, is on his passage to Philadelphia; the latter will embark early in June.

You will be at no loss to understand this state of things. Nothing but vigor and energy will save our country. Unanimity cannot be expected. Moderation and forbearance, with all the virtues that meekly follow in their train, have been faithfully employed, and without success. It is now time, and the wretched picture exhibited by the countries where France has introduced her detestable principles, should admonish us to give up half-way measures with half-way men. They do not belong to the times in which we live. The people of America will support their government, if that government acts with decision; if it appeals to the pride, the patriotism, and the honor of the nation! But if it temporizes, if it wastes itself in words, if it stops short of the only course that remains for its adoption, consistently with the public safety, the next election will convulse the country, and may, as the directory intend, and expect it shall, give the government to those who will deliver us up to the same ruin that continues to desolate Europe. There is a slight appearance that things are mending upon the continent; but little interests, little jealousies, and little men, whose united influence is opposed to the only effectual remedy for the mischief, forbid us to expect it until the evil has spread still wider; for so wretched are the governments on the continent, not yet subverted, that the best hope is from the people, who are cured when the fire has passed over them.

I received a short letter from you a few days since without date, which gave me great satisfaction, as it authorized the hopes that the public opinion was sounder than that of its representatives. War will increase the public taxes. These are unpleasant subjects for meditation; the passions must be attended to, they must have an object—there is a great one. I can't explain myself. I have had no occasion for reserve with the Secretary of State, because I write to him in cipher.

HAMILTON TO M'HENRY.

May 17th, 1798.

My Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of instant. Not having seen the law which provides the *naval armament*, I cannot tell whether it gives any new power to the President, that is, any power whatever with regard to the employment of the ships. If not, and he is left at the foot of the constitution, as I understand to be the case, I am not ready to say that he has any other power than merely to employ the ships as convoys, with authority to *repel* force by *force*, (but not to capture,) and to repress hostilities within our waters, including a marine league from our coasts.

Any thing beyond this must fall under the idea of *reprisals*, and requires the sanction of that department which is to declare or make war.

In so delicate a case, in one which involves so important a consequence as that of war, my opinion is, that no doubtful authority ought to be exercised by the President; but, that as different opinions about his power have been expressed in the House of Representatives, and no special power has been given by the law, it will be expedient for him, and his duty, and the true policy of the conjuncture, to come forward by a message to the two Houses of Congress, declaring that "*so far* and *no farther*" he feels himself *confident* of his authority to go in the employment of the naval force; that, as, in his opinion, the depredations on our trade demand a more extensive protection, he has thought it his duty to bring the subject under the review of Congress by a communication of his opinion of his own powers, having no desire to exceed the constitutional limits.

This course will remove all clouds as to what the President will do, will gain him credit for frankness and an unwillingness to chicane the constitution, and will return upon Congress the question in a shape which cannot be eluded.

I presume you will have heard before this reaches you, that a French privateer has made captures at the mouth of our harbor. This is too much humiliation after all that has passed.

Our merchants are very indignant; our government very prostrate in the view of every man of energy.

TRACY TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 17th, 1798.

SIR:

Our envoys continuing so long in Paris is not only a mortifying circumstance, but will probably prevent any energy of government, even in the Senate. A committee of the Senate to take into consideration the subject was together this morning, consisting of five members. I laid before them the following bill, viz.:

"A Bill declaring the treaties between the United States and the republic of France to be void, and more effectually to protect the commerce and the coast of the United States."

Whereas, the government of the French republic has repeatedly violated the treaties subsisting between the United States and the French nation; and whereas, under the authority of the said government, armed vessels belonging to the French republic and citizens thereof have repeatedly captured the ships and property of the citizens of the United States on the coasts thereof, while engaged in commerce authorized by said treaties, and the law of nations: Therefore, be it enacted,

That the treaties of alliance, and of amity and commerce, now subsisting between the United States and the French nation, which were agreed upon and signed at Paris on the 6th day of February, 1798, by the authority of the United States and the then king of France, and the stipulations contained therein, be, and they are hereby declared to be void and of no effect; and the United States, and every citizen thereof, are hereby declared to be released and discharged from all and singular the obligations and stipulations contained in said treaties, or either of them. And be it further enacted, "That the President of the United

States be, and he hereby is authorized to instruct the commanders of all armed vessels of the United States to take and bring into port all armed vessels belonging to the republic of France, or of any citizen thereof, which may be found within forty leagues of any part of the coast of the United States; and further, to instruct said commanders, who are employed to convoy any merchant vessel or vessels of the United States, not to permit search to be made on board of such vessel or vessels by officers or crews of a French cruiser or armed vessel on any pretense whatever."

This bill, you will see, is a rough draft; but the ideas were too strong for our committee. We may, possibly, with immense labor, drive through the Senate a bill authorizing instructions to capture a cruiser that has unjustifiably taken one of our vessels on our own coast—but the treaty must remain intangible until our envoys are out of Paris. I never permit myself to despair of the commonwealth; but I am sometimes exhausted and discouraged, and think the United States must succumb under the intrigues of the Great Nation. Our best men are so timid, and our worst so active and profligate, that nothing is done but with excessive fatigue and industry. Confidence in one another is lost—and among ourselves, I mean Federalists, there is a look out to secure against possible events; and protections from the French, who may invade us, are now thought of; and qualifications for friendship from French clemency are now in calculation.

Pardon me, sir, for troubling you so long. I wish for your assistance, and that of all good men, to excite our friends. Our enemies I fear not, if our friends will be faithful to themselves.

Yours respectfully,

URIAH TRACY.

HAMILTON TO KING.

May, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

It is a great while since I received a line from you, nor indeed have I deserved one; the vortex of business in which I

have been, having kept me from writing to you. At this moment, I presume, you will not be sorry to know my opinion as to the course of our public affairs.

In Congress a good spirit is gaining ground, and, though measures march slowly, there is reason to expect that almost every thing which the exigency requires will be done. The plan is, present defence against depredations by sea, and preparations for eventual danger by land. In the community, indignation against the French government, and a firm resolution to support our own, discover themselves daily by unequivocal symptoms. The appearances are thus far highly consoling.

But, in this posture of things, how unfortunate is it that the new instructions offered by Great Britain, which appear, according to the reports of the day, to be giving rise to many abusive captures of our vessels, are likely to produce a counter-current, and to distract the public dissatisfaction between two powers, who, it will be said, are equally disposed to plunder and oppress. In vain will it be urged, that the British government cannot be so absurd as at such a juncture to intend us injury. The effects will be alone considered, and they will make the worst possible impression. By what fatality has the British cabinet been led to spring any new mine, by new regulations, at such a crisis of affairs? What can be gained to counteract the mischievous tendency of abuses? Why are weapons to be furnished to our Jacobins?

It seems, the captured vessels are carried to the Mole, where there is a virtuous judge, of the name of *Cambault*, disposed to give sanction to plunder in every shape. Events are not yet sufficiently unfolded to enable us to judge of the extent of the mischief, but nothing can be more unlucky than that the door has been opened. The recency of the thing may prevent your hearing any thing about it from the government by this opportunity.

Yours affectionately, &c.

P. S. It is said, privateers are fitting out at Antigua and St. Kitts.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, May 19, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

At the present dangerous crisis of public affairs, I make no apology for troubling you with a political letter. Your impressions of our situation, I am persuaded, are not different from mine. There is certainly great probability that we may have to enter into a very serious struggle with France; and it is more and more evident that the powerful faction which has for years opposed the government, is determined to go every length with France. I am sincere in declaring my full conviction, as the result of a long course of observation, that they are ready to *new model* our constitution under the *influence* or *coercion* of France; to form with her a perpetual alliance, *offensive* and *defensive*, and to give her a monopoly of our trade by *peculiar* and *exclusive* privileges. This would be in substance, whatever it might be in name, to make this country a province of France. Neither do I doubt that her standard, displayed in this country, would be directly or indirectly seconded by them, in pursuance of the project I have mentioned.

It is painful and alarming to remark, that the opposition faction assumes so much a geographical complexion. As yet, from the south of Maryland nothing has been heard but accounts of disapprobation of our government, and approbation of or apology for France. This is a most portentous symptom, and demands every human effort to change it.

In such a state of public affairs, it is impossible not to look up to you, and to wish that your influence could in some proper mode be brought into direct action. Among the ideas which have passed through my mind for this purpose, I have asked myself whether it might not be expedient for you to make a circuit through Virginia and North Carolina, under some pretence of health, &c. This would call forth addresses, public dinners, &c., which would give an opportunity of expressing sentiments in answers, toasts, &c., which would throw the weight of your

character into the scale of the government, and revive an enthusiasm for your person, that may be turned into the right channel.

I am aware that the step is delicate, and ought to be well considered before it is taken. I have even not settled my own opinion as to its propriety, but I have concluded to bring the general idea under your view, confident that your judgment will make a right choice; and that you will take no step which is not well calculated. The conjuncture, however, is extraordinary, and now, or very soon, will demand extraordinary measures.

You ought also to be aware, my dear sir, that in the event of an open rupture with France, the public voice will again call you to command the armies of your country; and, though all who are attached to you will, from attachment, as well as public considerations, deplore an occasion which should once more tear you from that repose to which you have so good a right, yet it is the opinion of all those with whom I converse, that you will be compelled to make the sacrifice. All your past labor may demand to give it efficacy this further,—this very great sacrifice. Adieu, my dear Sir,

Respectfully and affectionately, &c.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 27th of May, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Yesterday brought me your letter of the 19th instant.

You may rest assured that my mind is deeply impressed with the present situation of our public affairs, and not a little agitated by the outrageous conduct of France towards the United States; and at the inimical conduct of its partisans among ourselves, who aid and abet their measures. You may believe further, from assurances equally sincere, that if there was any thing in my power which could be done with consistency to avert or

lessen the danger of the crisis, it should be rendered with hand and heart.

The expedient, however, which has been suggested by you, would not, in my opinion, answer the end which is proposed. The object of such a tour could not be veiled by the ostensible cover to be given to it; because it would not apply to the state of my health, which never was better; and as the measure would be susceptible of two interpretations, the enemies to it, always more active and industrious than friends, would endeavor, as much as in them lay, to turn it to their own advantage by malicious insinuations, unless they should discover that the current against themselves was setting too strong, and of too serious a nature for them to stem; in which case the journey would be unnecessary, and in either case, the reception might not be such as you have supposed.

But, my dear sir, dark as matters appear at present, and expedient as it is to be prepared at *all* points for the worst that can happen (and no one is more disposed to this measure than I am), I cannot make up my mind, *yet*, for the expectation of *open war;* or, in other words, for a formidable invasion by France. I cannot believe, although I think them capable of *any thing bad*, that they will attempt to do more than they have done; that when they perceive the spirit and policy of this country rising into resistance; and that they have falsely calculated upon support from a *large* part of the *people* thereof, to promote their views and influence in it, that they will desist, *even from those practices;* unless unexpected events in Europe, or their possession of Louisiana and the Floridas, should induce them to continue the measure. And I believe further, that although the *leaders* of their party, in this country, will not change their sentiments, that they will be obliged, nevertheless, to change their plan, or the mode of carrying it on, from the effervescence which is appearing in all quarters, and the desertion of their followers, which must frown them into silence, at least for a while.

If I did not view things in this light, my mind would be infinitely more disquieted than it is; for if a crisis should arrive, when a sense of duty, or a call from my country, should become

so imperious as to leave me no choice, I should prepare for the relinquishment, and go with as much reluctance from my present peaceful abode, as I should do to the tombs of my ancestors.

To say at this time, determinately, what I should do under such circumstances, might be improper, having once before departed from a similar resolution; but I may declare *to you*, that as there is no conviction in my breast that I could serve my country with more efficiency in the command of the armies it might levy, than many others, an expression of its wish that I should do it, must, somehow or other, be unequivocally known to satisfy my mind, that, notwithstanding the respect in which I may be held on account of former services, that a preference might not be given to a man more in his prime. And it may well be supposed too, that I should like, previously, to know who would be my coadjutors, and whether you would be disposed to take an active part, if arms are to be resorted to.

Before this letter can get to your hands, you will have seen the resolutions and proposed address from the citizens of Charleston, in South Carolina. Their proceedings will, I am persuaded, give the tone to other parts of *that* State. Two or three very good addresses have already appeared from North Carolina; one with the signature of a late governor thereof, Spaight. All the upper, most populous, and hardy yeomanry of this State, have come, and are coming forward with their addresses to the Executive, and assurances of support. The address from Norfolk (I do not mean the impertinent one from Magnier's grenadier company) is a good one. The middle counties of this State, with two or three exceptions, have hitherto been silent; they want leaders; but I shall be much mistaken if a large majority of them do not forsake, if they have heretofore been with, those who have pretended to speak their sentiments. As to the resolutions which were entered into at Fredericksburgh, it is only necessary to point to the manager of them, and add that the meeting was partial. From Georgia, no development of the public sentiment has yet made its appearance; but I have learnt from a very intelligent gentleman just returned from thence,

where he has been some time for the benefit of his health, travelling, going and returning slowly, and making considerable halts, that the people of that State, as also those of South and North Carolina, seem to be actuated by one spirit, *and that* a very friendly one to the general government. I have likewise heard, that the present governor of the first (Georgia), professes to be strongly attached to it. These disclosures, with what may yet be expected, will, I conceive, give a different impression of the sentiments of our people to the Directory of France, than what they have been taught to believe; while it must serve to abash the partisans of it for their wicked and presumptive information.

Your free communication on these political topics, is so far from needing an apology, that I shall be much gratified and thankful to you for the continuation of them; and I would wish you to believe that with great truth and sincerity, I am always your affectionate friend and obedient servant,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, June 2d, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have before me your favor of the 27th of May. The suggestion in my last was an indigested thought, begotten by my anxiety. I have no doubt that your view of it is accurate and well founded.

It is a great satisfaction to me to ascertain what I had anticipated in hope, that you are not determined in an *adequate emergency* against affording once more your military services. There is no one but yourself that would unite the public confidence in such an emergency, independent of other considerations, and it is of the last importance that this confidence should be *full and complete*. As to the wish of the country, it is certain that it will

be *ardent and universal.* You intimate a desire to be informed what would be my part in such an event as to entering into military service. I have no scruple about opening myself to you on this point. If I am invited to a station in which the service I may render may be proportionate to the sacrifice I am to make, I shall be willing to go into the army. If you command, the place in which I should hope to be most useful is that of Inspector-General, with a command in the line. This I would accept. The public must judge for itself as to whom it will employ, but every individual must judge for himself as to the terms on which he will serve, and consequently must estimate his own pretensions.

I have no knowledge of any arrangement contemplated, but I take it for granted the service of all the former officers worth having may be commanded, and that your choice would regulate the Executive. With decision and care in the selection an excellent army may be formed.

The view you give of the prospects in the South is very consoling. The public temper seems every where to be travelling to a right point. This promises security to the country in every event.

I have the honor to remain, my dear Sir,

Your faithful and affectionate servant, &c.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, June 5th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

The answer from the President to the Commander in Chief, &c., of New Jersey, contains in the close a very indifferent passage. The sentiment is intemperate and revolutionary. It is not for us, particularly for the government, to breathe an irregular or violent spirit. Hitherto I have much liked the President's answers, as, in the main, within proper bounds, and calculated to animate and raise the public mind. But there are limits which

must not be passed, and from my knowledge of the ardor of the President's mind, and this specimen of the effects of that ardor, I begin to be apprehensive that he may run into indiscretion. This will do harm to the government, to the cause, and to himself. Some hint must be given, for we must make no mistakes.

Inclosed is a sketch of some ideas which have run through my mind. They are perhaps none of them new, but they are offered as the evidence of my opinion on the point. As yet we are far short of the point of vigor.

Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

Further measures advisable to be taken without delay.

I. To authorize the President to proceed, forthwith, to raise the 10,000 men already ordered.

II. To establish an academy for military and naval instruction. This is a very important measure, and ought to be permanent.

III. To provide for the immediate raising of a corps of non-commissioned officers, viz.—sergeants and corporals, sufficient with the present establishment for an army of 50,000 men. The having these men prepared and disciplined will accelerate extremely the disciplining of an additional force.

IV. To provide, before Congress rise, that in case it shall appear that an invasion of this country by a large army is actually on foot, there shall be a draft from the militia to be classed, of a number sufficient to complete the army of 30,000 men. Provision for volunteers in lieu of drafts. A bounty to be given.

V. To authorize the President to provide a further naval force of six ships of the line and twelve frigates, with twenty small vessels not exceeding sixteen guns. It is possible the ships of the line and frigates may be purchased of Great Britain to be paid for in stock. We ought to be ready to cut up all the small privateers and gunboats in the West Indies, so as at the

same time to distress the French islands as much as possible, and protect our own trade.

VI. Is not the independence of the French colonies, under the guaranty of the United States, to be aimed at? If it is, there cannot be too much promptness in opening negotiations for the purpose. Victor Hughes is probably an excellent subject. This idea, however, deserves mature consideration.

VII. It is essential the Executive should have half a million of secret service money. If the measure cannot be carried without it, the expenditure may be with the approbation of three members of each house of Congress. But it were better without this incumbrance.

VIII. Revenue in addition to the $2,000,000 of land-tax, say

A stamp-duty on hats, as well manufactured at home as imported, distributed in three classes: 10, 15, 25 cents,		$500,000
Saddle horses one dollar each, excluding those engaged in agriculture,		100,000
Salt so as to raise the present duty to 25 cents per bushel.		
Male servants of these capacities, by whatever name, maître d'hotel, house steward, valet de chamber, butler, under butler, confectioner, cook, house porter, waiter, footman, coachman, groom, postilion, stable boy.*		
For one such servant,	$1.	
For two servants and not more,	2 each.	
For three servants and not more,	3 each.	
Above three,	4 each.	500,000
(One dollar additional by bachelors.)		
New modification, with greater diversity of licenses for sale of wines,		100,000
One per cent on all successions by descent or devise,		100,000

IX. A loan of $10,000,000. The interest to be such as will insure the loan at par. It is better to give high interest redeema-

* In lieu of tax of slaves which is liable to much objection.

ble at pleasure, than low interest with accumulation of capital, as in England.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, June 6th, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

We have certain intelligence that the Toulon expedition has sailed. The number of troops, of transports, and of men of war, are variously stated, but it is known, that Bonaparte commands, and that the fleet is a very great one. Its destination is the subject of inquietude and of conjecture. A few days will bring us more perfect accounts, and from the force and position of the British fleet under Lord St. Vincent, the public are in daily, not to say hourly expectation, of hearing that he has discovered and destroyed this boasted armada.

If Ireland is the object, the insurrection has been ill judged and premature. In almost every instance, the insurgents have been dispersed and killed, and the quarter round Dublin is now nearly restored to the king's peace. Still however, if a moderate French force, with a supply of arms, could now be thrown into Ireland, the issue would be dubious, so deep and general is the desertion. Great Britain is unquestionably in a better and more secure, as well as more united state, than she has been since the commencement of the war. With her the question with France is at issue, and so far as regards Europe, upon her alone must it essentially depend. For upon the continent, French principles and French influence seem still to extend themselves in every direction. Though it is more than a fortnight since the publication of the instructions and dispatches of our envoys must have been received at Paris, neither their papers nor letters from France take any notice of them. Gerry is still there, but about to return home, and, if I mistake not, will be the bearer of a soothing and treacherous message from the Directory. Be upon your guard. France will not declare war against us. No. Her

policy will be to pursue with us the same course she already has done, and which has served her purpose in Italy, and among the honest, but devoted and ruined Swiss.

I will say, if after all that has occurred among ourselves, and in other countries, we are content to be duped, and cajoled, and betrayed, we shall deserve the fate which they are preparing for us.

Yours affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO KING.

June 6th, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Official information and the public papers, will give you all the information I could give of the measures going on in this country. You will have observed with pleasure a spirit of patriotism kindling every where. And you will not be sorry to know that it is my opinion, that there will shortly be national unanimity, as far as that idea can ever exist. Many of the leaders of faction will persist, and take ultimately a station in the public estimation like that of the tories of our revolution.

Our chief embarrassment now is, the want of energy among some of our friends, and our councils containing too strong an infusion of those characters who cannot reform, and who, though a minority, are numerous enough, and artful enough, to perplex and relax. We do far less than we ought towards organizing and maturing for the worst the resources of the country. But I count that there is a progress of opinion which will probably shortly overcome this obstacle.

How vexatious that at such a juncture there should be officers of Great Britain, who, actuated by a spirit of plunder, are doing the most violent things, calculated to check the proper amount of popular feeling, and to furnish weapons to the enemies of government. Combauld at the Mole is acting a part quite

as bad as the Directory and their instruments. I have seen several of his condemnations. They are wanton beyond measure. It is not enough that his acts are disavowed, and a late and defective redress given through the channels of the regular courts. Justice, and the policy of the crisis, demand that he be decisively punished and disgraced. I think it probable you will be instructed to require this. It would be happy if the government where you are would anticipate.

It is unlucky too that Cochrane, of the Thetis, appears to be doing some ill things. The southern papers announce a number of captures lately made by him, and in some instances, if they say true, on very frivolous pretexts. The character of that gentleman would lead me to hope that there is in this some misrepresentation, but the present appearances against him are strong.

There seems a fatality in all this. It cannot be doubted that the British cabinet must at this time desire to conciliate this country. It is to be hoped they will not want vigor to do it with effect, by punishing those who contravene the object.

Yours affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

June 7th, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

As McHenry will probably have left Philadelphia before this reaches that place, I take the liberty to address the subject of it to you.

I have received a letter from Capt. Van Rensselaer, in which he informs me that he is a candidate for a commission on board of our navy, and requests my recommendation of it. As a connection of our family I cannot refuse it, as far as truth and propriety will warrant.

When he first began his career, the young man did things

which were not pretty; but he has since that retrieved his character by a conduct which has rapidly raised him to the command of a ship, which he has had of several. I have particularly inquired concerning him, and my inquiries have been satisfactorily answered—so that I really conclude he is a deserving man. But of this you can be better ascertained from persons in Philadelphia, in whose employ I believe he has sailed.

My only intention is to request *attention* to his *pretensions*, as far as they may appear to be good, and in the proportion which they bear to those of other candidates. I owe this to him as a family connection, and I may add that he is of a *brave* blood.

What do the British mean? What are these stories of the *Thetis*, &c.? In my opinion, our country is now to act in every direction with spirit. Will it not be well to order one of our frigates to Charleston, to protect effectually our commerce in that quarter, and if necessary control the *Thetis*? This conduct will unite and animate.

Yours truly.

P. S.—If an alien bill passes, I would like to know what policy, in execution, is likely to govern the *Executive*. My opinion is, that while the mass ought to be obliged to leave the country, the provisions in our treaties in favor of merchants ought to be observed, and there ought to be *guarded* exceptions of characters whose situations would expose them too much if sent away, and whose demeanor amongst us has been unexceptionable. There are a few such. Let us not be cruel or violent.

A. H.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, June 8, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Since writing you a day or two past I have had the pleasure to receive your letters by the packet, and am rejoiced to find my

hopes confirmed by your opinions that we shall not be wanting to ourselves in our conduct towards France.

Immediately on hearing of the proceedings of the Admiralty Judge of St. Domingo, I remonstrated to this government against them, and was without delay answered that General Simcoe had no power to erect the court, that the appointment of Judge Cambauld was illegal, and all his decrees void; and that those who had unfortunately suffered by them must, as in the Martinique cases, apply for satisfaction to the High Court of Admiralty in England. I expected, and so it was determined, that orders should have been instantly dispatched to suppress the court; this was omitted from the negligence of the officer to whom the duty belonged in the admiralty, hence the continuation of the court of St. Domingo. Orders have, however, at length been sent to suppress the court.

The instructions of the 25th of January, 1793, a copy of which was, on the 7th of February, sent to the Secretary of State, have been misrepresented or not understood. Instead of enlarging, the effect of them will, as it was intended it should, be to contract the description of cases in which the trade of neutrals, will be liable to interruption. The order, as it is called, of the 6th November, 1793, authorized the capture of all vessels carrying supplies to, or laden with the produce of the French West Indies. The instruction of the 8th of January, 1794, revoked this order, and substituted another in which the *bona fide* neutral trade between the United States and the French West Indies was considered as legal—while that between the French West Indies and Europe was liable to interruption by the vessels being sent in for adjudication. The late instruction of the 25th of January, which I have thought a point gained, enlarges the rights and security of the trade of neutrals, for instead of former restraints, it is now admitted, that a direct trade by neutrals between their respective countries and the French, Dutch and Spanish West Indies, out and home, and likewise the direct voyage from those colonies to any port in Great Britain are lawful, and not liable to interruption.

That the naval officers will often exercise their authority,

however limited, in abuse, will continue to be the case so long as the military profession is disgraced by a sordid love of gain, and so long as the system of the Admiralty Courts of England shall be so little satisfactory as they really are. We are, as you will naturally suppose, extremely impatient to receive information from the Mediterranean. It appears certain that the Toulon expedition sailed about the 19th of May. The force is variously reported. Buonaparte is supposed to be with the fleet, which is said to be thirteen ships of the line, as many frigates, and nearly four hundred transports—all the naval characters agree, that it is next to impossible that they can reach Ireland without discovery. Indeed, from the prevalence of the winds from the west, a single ship would, it is said, be at this season perhaps two months in making the voyage from Toulon to Ireland. The opinion that has the most advocates is, that the expedition is against Portugal—that the troops will be disembarked at Carthagena or Malaga in Spain, and that they will cross the mountains to Portugal. It is well understood that from the want of subsistence they could not have marched through Spain. But Portugal has no money, and all the plunder that would be obtained would not defray the expenses of the expedition. The enterprise would reduce Spain under the more complete control of France. Cadiz would become a French port. The English would be expelled from the Tagus. The Spanish fleet would be relieved as soon as the windy season arrives, and from the Tagus and Cadiz the expedition may go against the Brazils, and the treasure of South America may be at the disposal of the Directory. Besides, that country may be revolutionized on the French model, and this may prepare the way for the measures to be adopted towards us. Letters from Lord St. Vincent, of the 19th May, (when his fleet off Cadiz consisted of twenty-five sail of the line, in excellent condition,) induce the belief that Sir Roger Curtis would join him from the Greek station by the 22d or 23d, with ten sail of the line. His orders are to leave a force to block up Cadiz and watch the fleet, and to proceed with the residue of the fleet to search for and fight the Toulon fleet; and, according to every thing that we know, there is great reason to expect that he will be in season

to intercept them, even should their object be Carthagena or Malaga.

'Tis against every probability that the Toulon expedition can pass the Gut without discovery!

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 9th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I dropped you a hasty line to-day, acknowledging the receipt of your letters of the 7th and 8th. I now inclose to you a copy of the new British instructions, with Mr. King's remarks upon them. These, I have not the least doubt, are the instructions which the American captains from the West Indies, by misconceptions, have represented to be so injurious to our commerce.—Mr. Liston knows of no other, nor has Mr. King mentioned any besides these; and you will observe that Mr. King considers them as extending the right or the privilege of neutral commerce beyond the former instructions, and the long avowed claim of a right on her part (Britain) to interrupt and prevent any commerce of neutrals with the colonies, of her enemies, which was not permitted in time of peace.

The alien bills, introduced into both Houses of Congress, have undergone such alterations, I do not know their present form. Of one thing, however, you may rest assured, that they will not err on the side of severity, much less of cruelty. I wish they may really provide for the public safety.

Mr. Stoddart has accepted the office of Secretary of the Navy, and I expected him to arrive by this day at farthest. As soon as he comes to town, I will communicate what you say of Capt. Van Rensselaer.

In your letter of the 8th, you renew the subject of the captures by the Thetis, Captain Cochrane. Suspecting that the

Charleston complaints were the clamors of interested men engaged in illicit commerce, I mean with contraband goods, or covering the property of enemies to Great Britain, I mentioned the matter to Mr. Reed, of the Senate, who confirmed my suspicions. In short, in order to favor the French, and acquire great profits in trade, many American merchants have prostituted every fair principle of commerce, and put their captains on taking such deceitful oaths, as to render suspicious the papers of innocent merchants, to their vast injury. Nobody has been more noisy about British depredations than General Smith, of Baltimore. He particularly complained to me, ten months ago, of the loss of several of his vessels, captured, and sent into Mole St. Nicholas. I represented his complaints to Mr. Liston, who wrote to the admiral or commanding officer at St. Domingo. The answer returned showed, that one of Smith's vessels, on her voyago outward, had carried and delivered to the French administration eighteen hogsheads of *gunpowder*, cleared out as merchandise of *calicoes*, &c. I communicated this to General Smith, who wrote me a long letter upon the subject, but without denying the fact as to the gunpowder. I do not mention this as though it justified the judge, one Cambauld, a corrupt villain, in condemning the vessel captured on her *return* voyage; but the gunpowder having been delivered to the French *government*, the judge was disposed to suspect the produce received in return also belonged to the French; and that judge is so utterly unprincipled, a suspicion alone would induce him to condemn, unless handsomely bribed to acquit. His character and conduct I have long since described to Mr. King, who has conferred with Lord Grenville, who pronounces the court itself (appointed by Simcoe) illegal, like that erected by Admiral Jervis formerly at Martinico. In the mean time our *fair* merchants are suffering by its illegal acts. It is the shameful and often detected frauds in the documents furnished to our merchant vessels, that have induced the British naval officers to disregard their papers, and to rest satisfied with nothing short of an actual examination of their cargoes, and this vexation will doubtless continue more or less until the honest merchants come forward and expose their fraudulent neighbors.

I do not like the provisional army act. I do not believe gentlemen's expectations from volunteers will be verified. Many small corps will be formed, but not in numbers to supply the place of an army, especially as the bill was so altered as to subject them to march not only to an adjoining State, but to the remotest State in the Union. It is true, the President will not thus harass them, but they will be under apprehensions of it, and many will be discouraged. If they have spirit enough to disregard this, so would they march, when requested in time of invasion, into any State, although by law they might remain in their own, or an adjoining State. Instead of waiting an actual invasion, I think the raising of the army ought now to be commenced. It would take many months to form and bring it into a state of discipline, in which we could place any confidence. Small predatory incursions of the French, though they might occasion great destruction of property, would not be *dangerous*, and the militia might be sufficient to repel them, but what we have to guard against, is an invasion by a powerful army of veterans; and I do not know any body of *militia* adequate to stop their progress, and a fatal panic might be the consequence. They would hold out their lures to entice, and they would entice multitudes not to resist, at least if they did not join their standard, as has happened in every republic in Europe, which they have patronized. I have indeed a confidence in the populous, well armed, and unanimous northern States; but is there any 40,000 of that militia who could encounter, with any chance of success, 20,000 veterans? You know the militia cannot be moved at the order of the ablest commander. They are unmanageable, and the greater the number, the greater the mass of confusion. Gentlemen in Congress boast of the exploits of the militia in the American war, but where did they fight in a body of even five thousand men? where did they fight successfully alone, without regular troops, except in small corps of a few hundred men, which might be put in motion without much hazard of disorder? And excepting at Bunker Hill (which was a wonderful action), the militia victories against regulars were after the war had raged several years, during which the men had been frequently called

into actual service, and their minds and bodies were gradually prepared to meet dangers and hardships; and in the southern States the militiamen, whose prowess is now panegyrized (not unjustly), were rendered desperate by their situation. But all these advantageous circumstances would be wanting in case of such an invasion as that against which we have to provide. Why is a provisional army thought of, if an invasion is not to be apprehended? To propose a provisional army, to depend for its formation on an *actual invasion*, is to me the height of absurdity. Multitudes, who would now enroll themselves, would, at the moment when an invasion should find them unarmed and defenceless, shrink into abject submission to the foe. But the President may also commence the raising this army in case of "imminent danger of invasion, discovered, in his opinion, to exist." At the same time, it is understood such danger does not now exist; and what circumstances will render the danger imminent? The successful invasion of England, or even of Ireland (for in either case, if not wholly subdued, England would be fully employed), would put us in jeopardy. If England still struggles, France might be induced to keep all her force in Europe until the conquest was complete; but, considering that she has a redundancy of soldiers, and a natural expectation would be presented of an easy conquest and submission here, if she made a sudden and unlooked-for invasion, I own that the danger would then appear to me imminent; and I think it so imminent, even now, that the army ought forthwith to be raised. But, admitting that she fails in her projects against England, she may be induced to make peace with her—and her alone—for such has been the uniform policy of the French rulers in all their successes. They will then renew their demands upon us, and we must yield or make war alone. Britain, certainly, will not recommence the war for our sakes; and though she would regret our submission to France, and therefore might be willing, in her negotiations of peace with France, to stipulate for us also, yet, have we any right to expect it? With so many marks of aversion and repulsion towards her, could we have the face to ask it? I know there are some who deem her profligate enough, if France should propose a division of the States

between herself and England, that the latter would agree to it; but I am not disposed to believe it. I think the animosities and hatred engendered in the American revolution towards England exist yet, in some breasts, in greater force than our interest or our safety admit; and these passions will keep us aloof till any co-operation may become impracticable. We cannot expect overtures from England. I very much suspect she is waiting to receive them from us. I wish you were in a situation not only "to see all the cards," but to play them. With all my soul I would give you my *hand*, and engage in any other *game*, in which I might best co-operate on the same side, *to win the stakes*.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

June 29th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have this moment seen a bill brought into the Senate, entitled "A Bill to define more particularly the crime of Treason, etc." There are provisions in this bill, which, according to a cursory view, appear to me highly exceptionable, and such as, more than any thing else, may endanger civil war. I have not time to point out my objections by this post; but I will do it tomorrow. I hope, sincerely, the thing may not be hurried through. LET US NOT ESTABLISH A TYRANNY. Energy is a very different thing from violence. If we make no false step, we shall be essentially united; but if we push things to an extreme, we shall then give to faction *body* and solidity.

KING TO HAMILTON.

London, July 2d, 1798.

Dear Sir:

France will pursue with us the plan that she has elsewhere found successful. She will endeavor to overthrow us by the divisions among ourselves, which she will excite and support by all the means of which she is mistress. The Paris papers of the 18th ult. say, "Le Citoyen Roziers est nommé Consul General aux Etats Unis, Garnier (en conventional de Santes) consul, et Boseg vice-consul à Wilmington, Quillet, consul à Tangers-passe à Norfolk, Bosc à New-York, et le Citoyen Sottin, ambassadeur près la Republique Ligurienne (and I presume the former minister of police), *vient d'être nommé consul à New-York.*"

If any thing could exceed the past insolence of France, it would be this attempt to plant in our chief towns a corps of revolutionary agents under the mask of public characters, and whom she expects, I hope falsely, that our government will receive and permit to reside among us, after having herself repeatedly refused and expelled from her territories our public ministers.

Another arrêt of the Directory has added Hayre to the ports into which our vessels are forbid an entry; so that we cannot now enter the ports of Toulon, Rochefort, L'Orient, Brest, Dunkerque, or Havre. Cadiz and the Texel are closed by the British squadrons, and I apprehend that the Meuse will likewise be blockaded, as the British North Sea fleet is by this time reinforced by the Russian squadron.

We are still at a loss where Buonaparte is bound. He sailed from Toulon the 19th of May. My opinion has been that Ireland was his object. At present, it seems to be the general opinion that he never intended to leave the Mediterranean. In a few days we must hear of him. The English confidently believe that he will fall into the hands of Admiral Nelson, who is in pursuit of him. In Ireland, though for some months there will be partial and unimportant risings, the force of the insurrection

is broken, and the danger nearly over. The chiefs have been without much character and without any intellect. There is no indication that they have received a single musket from France, and in general they are without arms, except pikes. There is but one remedy for Ireland, and it is that which has proved so successful with Scotland. Ireland, like Scotland, must become an integral part of the British empire, or she will continue ignorant, ill-governed, oppressed, and wretched.

M'HENRY TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 2d, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

The crisis, and the almost universal wish of the people to see you at the head of the armies of the United States, has been too strong to be resisted. The President has yielded to causes so powerful and nominated you accordingly, which has been unanimously confirmed to-day by the Senate.

Thus you are again called upon by all voices to fill a station which all think you alone qualified for at this moment. I know what must be your feelings, and how many motives you must have for preferring the privacy you are in the enjoyment of, to the troubles and perplexities of a commander of an army. This, however, is the crowning sacrifice, which I pray to God you may agree to make for the sake of your country, and give the last finish to a fame nothing short of such a call and the present occasion could have been capable of increasing.

I think it probable that the President will request me to be the bearer of his letter to you. I shall, in that case, have an opportunity to converse with you at large on several subjects relative to the army, and to agree with you upon such arrangements as may leave you as long as possible at Mount Vernon. Perhaps I may set out on Friday, or at the furthest Monday next.

Present me to Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis, and accept of my sincere attachment and unchangeable affection.

WASHINGTON TO M^CHENRY.

(PRIVATE)

MOUNT VERNON, 5th July, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I am perfectly satisfied that the duties of your office were not diminished by the duties thrown upon it in the course of the present session of Congress, and far was it from my wish to add to the trouble of them. I expected no more than a simple acknowledgment of my letters; and, with respect to the proposed arsenal at the confluence of the Potomac and Shanandoah, that you would have said that it *had*, or had *not* been forgotten, according to the fact.

I am well satisfied with your reply to my last; better, perhaps, than you will be with reading the lengthy scrawl herewith inclosed, to which it has given rise, and which, if you please, *as from yourself*, may be shown to the President, to whom I have expressed tantamount sentiments in more concise terms. If you are at liberty, and deem it expedient, communicate the response which shall be made to it to me.

The President's letter to me, though not so expressed in terms, is, nevertheless, strongly indicative of a wish that I should take charge of the military force of this country; and, if I take his meaning right, to aid also in the selection of the general officers. The appointment of these are *important*—but those of the General Staff are *all important;* insomuch that if I am looked to as the commander-in-chief, I must be allowed to choose such as will be agreeable to me. To say more, at *present*, would be unnecessary; first, because an army may not be wanted,—and, secondly, because I might not be indulged in this choice if it was.

You will readily perceive that a main difficulty with *me*, in this business, proceeds from the different epochs at which the army may be formed, and at which it would be proper for me to take the command of it (in case the preliminaries mentioned in my other letter are solved to my satisfaction). The President, knowing that 10,000 men cannot be raised by the blowing of a trump, might deem it expedient, from such appearances or information as would justify him under the act, to prepare for the worst. I, on the other hand, have no disposition, and think it would be bad policy to come forward before the emergency *becomes evident*, farther than that it might be known that I will step forward, when it does appear so, unequivocally; and if the matters for which I have stipulated as previously necessary, are ascertained and accommodated, I shall have no objection to the annunciation (if good would result from it) of this determination. But what is to be done in the interval? I see but two ways to overcome the difficulty, if it is an object to accommodate my wishes; first, to delay the appointment of the General Staff to the latter epoch, if no inconvenience would result from it—or, if this cannot be, then to advise with me on the appointment of them. I mention

the matter *now*, and in this *manner*, because I have some reason to believe that there are very fit men who would be coadjutors with me, whose services without could not be commanded.

Although I have made my stand at the General Staff, I conceive that much will depend upon active and spirited officers for the divisions and brigades of the army; and (under the rose) I shall candidly declare that I do not, from my present recollection of them, conceive that a desirable set could be formed from the old generals; some on account of their age and infirmities—some from never having displayed any talents for enterprise—and others from their general opposition to the government, or their predilection to French measures, be their present conduct what it may; for those who will come up with a flowing tide, will descend with the ebb; and there can be no dependence upon them in moments of difficulty. If circumstances would allow a choice of field officers, the service would be much benefited by it. With my two letters I must have tired you sufficiently, and, therefore, I shall only add what you knew before, and that

I am your affectionate

GEO. WASHINGTON.

P. S. I have already been applied to by one gentleman, to recommend him for director of the Hospital, which I have refused; as well on general grounds, as because, if I should ever have occasion for physician or surgeon, I should prefer my old surgeon, Doctor Craik, who, from 40 years' experience, is better qualified than a dozen of them put together.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, July 7th, 1798.

Buonaparte has made the *début* of the campaign by the easy though important conquest of Malta. This island has been supposed impregnable, and therefore was the depository of great wealth, removed thither from Italy. It contained likewise an excellent arsenal, two or three ships of the line, and as many as 6,000 excellent seamen. It was the Maltese seamen who made the fine campaign under Suffrein in the East Indies, during the American war. Sicily is near, and from thence the French will obtain provisions, should Admiral Nelson attempt to blockade the fleet in the harbor of Malta. Buonaparte may perhaps take

possession of Sicily, after which Naples would almost fall of course. We are left to conjecture what are his ulterior plans. I don't perceive that it is believed that the English squadron can, owing to the tempests of those seas, maintain a long blockade. At Rastadt procrastination is the game. The French journalists amused themselves with calling it "the Eternal Congress." I see no likelihood of a concert upon the Continent against France. The struggle is left to England, who certainly maintains it with increased zeal and resolution. For some months past we have not a word about peace. No one appears to think that peace would bring safety. The affair of Ireland is nearly finished. Cornwallis has requested that no more troops should be sent him, and that those on their way should be countermanded. In this state of things, we are (for so I consider our situation) forced into a war of defence. Have you received a former letter of mine on this subject? It is of infinite importance that we are not deceived by ourselves or others. We must do more than merely defend. I still think that the object that I have before suggested, demands all our consideration, wisdom and energy. Don't suppose that I would combine our fortunes with those of others. On the contrary, whatever our interest may require in regard to a co-operation with others, I am averse to indissoluble engagements with any one. The Continent of Europe cannot be saved, but this is no reason why America should likewise perish. France is the only nation that projects enterprises, or succeeds in putting them into execution; all others are puzzled in a perpetual effort to find out and defeat the plans of France, without concerting and attempting to execute one that might give to France the disadvantage of defence. If we follow this course, I dread the issue.

Farewell. Yours, &c.

I am mortified with the probable result of the elections of New-York. Mr. Jay, according to probabilities, is re-elected, but how very considerable has been the opposition. Besides, what is to become of us if we return such members to Congress as I think it likely will compose a majority of our next delegation?

KING TO HAMILTON.

London, July 14, 1798.

Dear Sir:

I send you inclosed an interesting little piece addressed to Gallatin by a former citizen of Geneva. If translated and published, it may do good. We have no news from the Mediterranean since the capture of Malta, nor can we do more than conjecture the future destination of Buonaparte. Turin, with its arsenals, is possessed by a French army; so that Sardinia is at the feet of the Directory. The Emperor continues to recruit his armies, and is now laying up magazines in the Tyrol. His expenses are said to be equal to those of an open war, and his resources unequal to his present expenditures. Prussia manifests no inclination to enter into a new coalition against France, and there are who suspect a most intimate connection between these powers. In short, the fate of Europe is as uncertain and difficult to understand as at any period of the war. It is at least ten days since the spirited measures pursued in America must have been known at Paris. We are, therefore, anxious to learn the effect they have produced. They will be entirely disappointed, and my conjecture is, that, contrary to their wishes, their pride will drive them to declare war against us. On the 13th of June, Gen. Pinckney was still at Lyons; his daughter was much better, and he flattered himself with the expectation of being able to reach Bourdeaux and to embark by the middle of this month. On the 26th of June, Mr. Gerry was at Paris, waiting, say letters from Americans who are about him, for the ultimatum of the Directory. Letters are sent in every direction by the Americans in Paris, which say that the Directory hold a conciliatory language, and that Mr. Gerry is in hopes to procure terms which will be honorable and satisfactory to his country. I thought it impossible that any future step of Mr. G. could exceed in and what had passed when he decided to separate from his colleagues and remain at Paris, but I was mistaken. His answer to Talleyrand's demands of the names of X. Y. and Z. place him in a

more degraded light than I ever believed it possible that he or any other American could be exhibited.

I send you Bellamy's address. It, as well as all that has been published, serves to confirm the public detestation against the Directory. The American dispatches have been circulated throughout Europe, and have every where done much good, and increased the reputation of our government.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, 31st July, 1798.

You will believe that I have been much gratified by the late intelligence from home. France has calculated all her plans on our decisions, and the expectation that her friends, if not more numerous, would be more active, and possess greater energy, than the friends of our government,—or rather, she has believed that our government, like that of every country that she has succeeded to overturn and enslave, would act with such timidity, and in so qualified a manner, that the affections and support of the people would be easily withdrawn from, and even turned against it. If the government continue to speak and act with decision, the people will become more and more united, and still better inclined to execute its purposes. This opinion should be taken in connection with an observation (the importance of which appears to me the greater the oftener I consider it) that I have suggested in more than one of my late letters. The composition of addresses, and the forming of volunteer associations, who will have nothing to do, are for the present well; but they will cease to be novelties, and soon become tiresome, and to be secure, you must have some sufficient object that will interest and employ the passions of the nation. The mere defensive system of the enemies of France has been a principal cause of her success, and if we adopt the error, we shall be exposed to greater risques, than by a bold and active system, which, ex-

clusive of being the most certain means of safety, would promise the acquisition of great and lasting advantages. The destiny of the new world, and I have a full and firm persuasion that it will be both happy and glorious, is in our hands. We have a right, and it is our duty, to deliberate and to act, not as secondaries, but as principals. The object and the occasion are such as we ought not, in respect to ourselves or others, to suffer to pass unimproved.

I have nothing to observe in reference to the subject of regret and complaint mentioned in your last letter. You will not doubt that all the means in my power have been employed to correct the mischief. They have served only to convince me that it is incorrigible. It is an evil too deeply rooted, and too powerfully protected, to be cured; and it is something gained to know that it is so. If we are wise, we shall hasten the events that will place the remedy in our own hands. A frigate returning from Malta to Toulon with dispatches, and a general officer, has been captured by an English frigate, and we are told that Buonaparte had sailed on his expedition two days before the English fleet that pursues him arrived there. If so, the French fleet is in great danger. Many persons think that great events depend on the success or failure of Buonaparte's expedition. All the late accounts from Paris say a new storm is at hand, but none express a hope that the changes it may effect will make the condition of France or of others better. Gerry still hangs about the Directory!! At Rastadt the Congress continues, and the jealousies between Austria and Prussia, artfully kept alive by the common enemy, prevent that hearty union, without which no successful co-operation will take place against France.

In Ireland the rebellion is suppressed, and our government will, I hope, have the power and inclination to exclude those disaffected characters, who will be suffered to seek any asylum among us. England is more than ever united, and resolves, with confidence in the superiority of her resources, to prosecute the war. There is no talk of peace, nor is there any appearance which would lead to an opinion, that new overtures for that purpose are likely soon to be made.

On the other hand, France is undoubtedly extremely embarrassed any longer to find the money necessary to maintain her arms, and carry on the war.

Be so kind as to present my affectionate respects and congratulations to the governor. I ought to write to him; but I consider a letter to him or you, as nearly the same.

With great truth and attachment I am,
Dear Sir, yours, &c.

P. S.—We have just heard that Gerry has received his passport. At the close of Talleyrand's letter, sending it, he says, though the Directory, as a measure of precaution, has laid an embargo upon all American vessels, "telle est la répugnance du Directoire à considérer les Etats Unis comme ennemis, qui malgré leurs démonstrations hostiles, il veut attendre, qu'il y voit irrésistibilement forcé par les hostilités réelles."

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 8th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I was much surprised on my arrival here to discover that your nomination had been without any previous consultation of you. Convinced of the goodness of the motives, it would be useless to scan the propriety of the step. It is taken, and the question is, what, under the circumstances, ought to be done? I use the liberty which my attachment to you and to the public authorizes, to offer my opinion that you should not decline the appointment. It is evident that the public satisfaction at it is lively and universal. It is not to be doubted that the circumstance will give an additional spring to the public mind—will tend much to unite, and will facilitate the measures which the conjuncture requires. On the other hand, your declining would certainly produce the opposite effects, would throw a great damp upon the

ardor of the country, inspiring the idea that the crisis was not really serious or alarming. At least, then, let me entreat you, and in this all your friends, indeed all good citizens will unite, that if you do not give an unqualified acceptance, that you accept provisionally, making your entering upon the duties to depend on future events, so that the community may look up to you as their certain commander. But I prefer a simple acceptance.

It may be well, however, to apprise you, that the arrangement of the army may demand your particular attention. The President has no *relative* ideas, and his prepossessions on military subjects in reference to such a point are of the wrong sort. It is easy for us to have a good army, but the selection requires care. It is necessary to inspire confidence in the efficient part of those who may incline to military service. Much adherence to routine would do great harm. Men of capacity and exertion in the higher stations are indispensable. It deserves consideration, whether your presence at the seat of government is not necessary. If you accept, it will be conceived that the arrangement is yours, and you will be responsible for it in reputation. This, and the influence of a right arrangement upon future success, seem to require that you should, in one mode or another, see efficaciously that the arrangement is such as you would approve.

I remain dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obedient servant.

JAY TO PICKERING.

New-York, July 10th, 1798.

Dear Sir:

I this morning received the two copies you was so obliging as to send me of the state papers, published in pursuance of the resolution of Congress, of the 22d June. They shall be laid before our legislature at the approaching session. Every true American here rejoices that General Washington has accepted

the command of the army. It is an auspicious event. Being of the number of those who expect a severe war with France, the moment she makes peace with Britain, I feel great anxiety that nothing may be omitted to prepare for it. At the commencement, and indeed during the course of our revolutionary war, we suffered from the inefficiency of too many of our military officers. Great care should be taken to avoid the like mistakes. Form and rank cannot compensate for the want of essential qualifications. To pass by certain characters cannot but be unpleasant; and yet, in my opinion, public good forbids their being called to the field. We shall probably have very different Generals to contend with from those which Britain sent here last war; and we should have very different ones to oppose them from several of those who then led our troops. I cannot conceal from you my solicitude, that the late Secretary of the Treasury may be brought forward in a manner corresponding with his talents and services.

It appears to me that his former military station and character, taken in connection with his late important place in the administration, would justify measuring his rank by his merit and value. Pardon these hints; I know that these matters are not within my department, but they occupy my mind continually. It is an agreeable circumstance that our President, notwithstanding the diplomatic skill of France, stands high in the public estimation and confidence, and that the utmost reliance may be reposed in his patriotism. He has much to think of and to do; but while his measures are well matured, deliberately adopted, and vigorously executed, his administration will be rendered more and more glorious by successive difficulties.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN JAY.

WASHINGTON TO PICKERING.

MOUNT VERNON, 11th July, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

As I never get letters by the mail until the morning after they arrive in Alexandria, and frequently not for several days, as I am not regular in sending thither, your favor of the 6th instant did not reach my hands until yesterday. Of the fitness and abilities of the gentleman you have named for a high command in the *provisional army*, I think as you do; and that his services ought to be secured at almost any price. What the difficulties are that present themselves to the mind of the President, in opposition to this measure, I am entirely ignorant; but in *confidence*, and with the frankness you have disclosed your own sentiments on this occasion, I will unfold mine, under the view I have taken of the prospect before us; and shall do it concisely. If the French should be so *mad* as openly and formidably to invade these United States, in expectation of subjugating the government, laying them under contribution, or in hope of dissolving the Union, I conceive there can hardly be two opinions respecting their plan, and that their operations will commence in the southern quarter. 1. Because it is the weakest. 2. Because they will expect, from the tenor of the debates in Congress, to find more friends there. 3. Because there can be no doubt of their arming our own negroes against us; and 4. Because they will be more contiguous to their islands, and to Louisiana, if they should be possessed thereof; which they will be, if they can. If these premises are just, the inference I am going to draw, from placing Colonel Hamilton over General Pinckney, is natural and obvious. The latter is an officer of high military reputation—fond of the profession, spirited, active, and judicious; and much advanced in the estimation of the public by his late conduct as Minister and Envoy at Paris. With these pretensions, and being senior to Colonel Hamiltion, he would not, I am morally certain, accept a junior appointment. Disgust would follow, and its influence would spread, where most to be deprecated, as his connections are numerous, powerful, and more influential than any other in the three southern States. Under this view of the subject I think it would be impolitic, and might be dangerous, to sow the seeds of discontent at so important a crisis. To this may be added, that impediments to the return of General Pinckney, and causes unforeseen, might place Colonel Hamilton in the situation you wish to see him. Inspector-General, with a command in the line, would, I hope and trust, satisfy him. You already perceive that the difficulty in my mind arises from thorough conviction that, if an invasion is attempted, it will commence south of Maryland, and from the importance of so influential a character as Pinckney (if among us) being heartily engaged in repelling it. But not having the laws at hand to resort to, or knowing precisely what general officers are authorized by them, I am speaking much at random, and request, for that reason, that nothing which I have here said may be considered definitive. What

arrangements the Secretary of War is empowered by the President to make with me, I know not. In the letter of the former to me, he has not touched upon them. He is not yet arrived, but the bearer of this to the post-office in Alexandria, carries up my carriage in order to accommodate him down; this being the afternoon on which the mail stage is expected at that place. I regret, however, that he should have left Philadelphia before a letter which I had written him could have reached that place. This letter went from hence on Friday last, before I knew or had the most distant suspicion of the President's intention of nominating me (without previous notice) to the trust he has done, but was written in consequence of a wish expressed in a letter from the Secretary to me, that the crisis might overcome my reluctance to appear again on the public theatre. Upon this occasion I thought it expedient before matters proceeded further, to be candid and explicit, and accordingly wrote him my sentiments in detail, the substance of which was—that if an *actual invasion* by a formidable force, or such demonstrations of the intention as could not be mistaken, I conceived it to be a duty which I owed to my country, and to my own reputation, to step forward with my best endeavors to repel it, however painful the measure might be to a person of my time of life, and under the circumstances I am; but for the satisfaction of my own mind I should like to know, from the best evidence the case was susceptible of, that my services as Commander-in-Chief would be preferred to those of a man of more juvenile years, in the prime and vigor of life. And that as neither ambition, interest, or personal gratification of any sort, could induce me to engage again in the turmoils and hazards of war,—as I had every thing to risk, and hardly any thing to gain, (the vicissitudes of war being in the hands of the Supreme Director, where no control is,) and as the army was about to be formed, and every thing in a manner depending upon the arrangement and organization, it could not be expected that I would take the command of it without previously knowing who my coadjutors were to be, and having the assistance of those in whom I could place confidence. I mentioned no names, for at that time I knew nothing of my own appointment, and thought the matter too much in embryo to go further, and to allow him, if a fit occasion occurred, to let these, as my sentiments, be known to the President. I shall conclude with sincere esteem and regard,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient and affectionate servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

KING TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

LONDON, July 14th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I send you inclosed an interesting little piece, addressed to Gallatin, by a former citizen of Geneva—if translated and published, it may do good. We have no news from the Mediterranean since the capture of Malta, nor can we do more than conjecture the future destination of Bonaparte. Turin, with its arsenals, is possessed by a French army, so that Sardinia is at the feet of the Directory. The Emperor continues to recruit his armies, and is now laying up magazines in the Tyrol. His expenses are said to be equal to those of an open war, and his resources unequal to his present expenditures. Prussia manifests no inclination to enter into a new coalition against France; and there are who suspect a most intimate connection between these powers. In short, the fate of Europe is as uncertain and difficult to understand as at any period of the war.

It is at least ten days since the spirited measures pursued in America must have been known at Paris; we are therefore anxious to learn the effect they have produced. They will be entirely disappointed; and my conjecture is, that, contrary to their wishes, their pride will drive them to declare war against us. On the 13th of June General Pinckney was still at Lyons; his daughter was much better; and he flattered himself with the expectation of being able to reach Bourdeaux, and to embark by the middle of this month.

On the 26th of June Mr. Gerry was at Paris, waiting, say letters from Americans who are about him, for the ultimatum of the Directory. Letters are sent in every direction by the Americans at Paris, which say, that the Directory hold a conciliatory language, and that Mr. Gerry is in hopes to procure terms which will be honorable and satisfactory to his country. I thought it impossible that any future step of Mr. G—— could exceed in —— and —— what had passed, when he decided to separate from his

colleagues and remain at Paris; but I was mistaken. His answer to Talleyrand's demands of the names of X, Y, and Z, place him in a more degraded light than I ever believed it possible that he or any other American could be exhibited.

I send you Bellamy's address. It, as well as all that has been published, serves to confirm the public detestation against the Directory. The American dispatches have been circulated throughout Europe, and have every where done much good, and increased the reputation of our government.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

MOUNT VERNON, July 14th, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 8th instant was presented to me by the Secretary of War on the 11th, and I have consented to embark once more on a boundless field of responsibility and trouble, with two reservations. First, that the principal officers in the line and of the staff shall be such as I can place confidence in; and that I shall not be called into the field until the army is in a situation to require my presence, or it becomes indispensable by the urgency of circumstances; contributing, in the meanwhile, every thing in my power to its efficiency and organization, but nothing to the public expense, until I am in a situation to incur expense myself.

It will be needless, after giving you this information, and having indelibly engraved on my mind, the assurance contained in your letter of the 2d of June, to add, that I rely upon you as a coadjutor and assistant in the turmoils I have consented to encounter.

I have communicated very fully with the Secretary of War on the several matters contained in the powers vested in him by

the President; who, as far as it appears by them, is well disposed to accommodate. But I must confess that besides nominating me to the command of the armies without any previous consultation or notice, the whole of that business seems to me to stand upon such ground, as may render the Secretary's journey, and our consultation of no avail.

Congress, it is said, would rise this week. What then has been done, or *can* the President do, with respect to appointments under that bill, if it has been enacted? Be his inclinations what they may, unless the law *could* and *has* passed, enabling him in the recess of the Senate to make appointments conformable thereto, the nominations must have been made, and the business done here with the Secretary is rendered nugatory.

By the pending bill, if it passes to a law, two Major-Generals, and an Inspector-General with the rank of Major-General, and three Brigadiers, are to be appointed. Presuming on its passing, I have given the following as my *sentiment* respecting the characters fit and proper to be employed; in which the Secretary concurs.

Alexander Hamilton, Inspector, Charles C. Pinckney, Henry Knox, or if either of the last mentioned refuses, Henry Lee, of Virginia,	Major-General.
Henry Lee, (if not Major-General,) John Brooks, Massachusetts, William S. Smith, New-York, or John E. Howard, Maryland,	Brigadiers.
Either Edward Hand, Pen. Jonathan Dayton, jr., New Jersey, or William S. Smith, to be	Adjutant-General.
Edward Carrington, Quartermaster-General.	
James Craik, Director of Hospitals.	

And I have enumerated the most prominent characters that have occurred to my mind, from whom to select field officers for the regiments of infantry, and that of cavalry, which are proposed to be raised.

And now, my dear sir, with that candor which you always have, and I trust ever will experience from me, I shall express to you a difficulty which has arisen in my mind, relative to seniority between you and General Pinckney; for with respect to my friend General Knox, whom I love and esteem, I have ranked him below you both. That you may know from whence this difficulty proceeds, it is proper I should observe, and give it as my decided opinion, that if the French should be so mad as to invade this country in expectation of making a serious impression, that their operations will commence in the States south of Maryland; 1st, because they are the weakest; 2d, because they will expect from the tenor of the debates in Congress, to find more friends there; 3d, because there can be no doubt of their arming the negroes against us; and 4th, because they would be more contiguous to their islands, and to Louisiana and the Floridas, if they can obtain possession of them; and that this will be the case, if they are able to accomplish it, is, to my mind, a matter that admits of no doubt.

If these premises are just, the inference is obvious, that the services and influence of General Pinckney in the southern States would be of the highest and most interesting importance. Will he serve, then, under one whom he will consider his junior officer? and what would be the consequence if he should refuse, and his numerous and powerful connections and acquaintances in those parts get disgusted? You have, no doubt, heard that his military reputation stands high in the southern States; that he is viewed as a brave, intelligent, and enterprising officer; and, if report be true, that no officer in the late American army made tactics and the art of war so much his study. To this account of him may be added, that his character has received much celebrity by his conduct as minister and envoy at Paris.

Under this view of the subject, my wish to put you first, and my fear of losing him, is not a little embarrassing. But why? for after all it rests with the President to use his pleasure. I shall only add, therefore, that as the welfare of the country is the object I persuade myself we all have in view, I shall sanguinely hope that smaller matters will yield to measures which

have a tendency to promote it. I wish devoutly that either of you or any other fit character had been nominated in my place; for no one can make a greater sacrifice, at least of inclination, than your ever affectionate

GEO. WASHINGTON.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 16, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have just received from General Washington an answer to my letter which I showed you.

The General appears to have contemplated attentively the nature of the impending war with France, and that the Southern States (if any part of the Union) will be invaded. Admitting this idea to be correct, the General says:

"The inference I am going to draw from placing Col. Hamilton over General Pinckney is natural and obvious. The latter is an officer of high military reputation, fond of the profession, spirited, active and judicious, and much advanced in the estimation of the public by his late conduct as minister and envoy at Paris. With these pretensions, and being senior to Colonel Hamilton, he would not, I am morally certain, accept a junior appointment; and its influence* would spread where most to be deprecated, as his connections are numerous, powerful, and more influential than any other in the three Southern States. Under this view of the subject, it would be impolitic, and might be dangerous, to sow the seed of discontent at so important a crisis. To this may be added, that impediments to the return of General Pinckney, and causes unforeseen, might place Col. Hamilton in the situation you wish to see him. You will readily perceive that the difficulty in my mind arises from a thorough conviction that, if an invasion is attempted, it will commence South of Ma-

* I suppose, of General Pinckney's non-acceptance.

ryland; and from the importance of so influential a character as Pinckney (if among us) being heartily engaged in repelling it."

The General concludes, from this reasoning, with hoping that the office of Inspector-General, with a command in the line, will prove satisfactory to you. I ought to have first quoted the General's preliminary observation: "Of the abilities and fitness of the gentleman you have named for a high command in the provisional army, I think as you do, and that his services ought to be secured at *almost* any price."

These communications from the General to me are "in confidence," and as such you will receive them. I presume there is some understanding between you on the subject. At all events, I trust that the same genuine patriotism which determined you and some others to encounter the perils of the American Revolution, and by your talents and active labors to swell another's glory, will prompt you again to come forth in a situation, if not at the height of my wishes and of those of your friends, certainly in a situation in which you can render invaluable services, and as certainly obtain a large share of honor and military fame.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

NEW-YORK, July 17, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your friendly letter by the post. I had not contemplated the possibility that *Knox* might come into service, and was content to be second to him, if thought indispensable. *Pinckney*, if placed over me, puts me a grade lower. I don't believe it to be necessary. I am far from certain that he will not be content to serve under me, but I am willing that the affair should be so managed as that the relative ranks may remain open to future settlement, to ascertain the effect of the arrangement which has been contemplated.

I am not, however, ready to say, that I shall be satisfied with the appointment of Inspector-General, with the rank and command of Major-General, on the principle that every officer of higher rank in the late army, who may be appointed, is to be above me.

I am frank to own that this will not accord with my opinion of my own pretensions, and I have every reason to believe that it will fall far short of public opinion.

Few have made so many sacrifices as myself. To few would a change of situation for a military appointment be so injurious as myself. If, with this sacrifice, I am to be degraded below my just claim in public opinion, ought I to acquiesce?

Yours affectionately, &c.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

(CONFIDENTIAL.)

PHILADELPHIA, July 18th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have before me yours of yesterday. In the morning of yesterday, McHenry returned with General Washington's acceptance of the command of the armies, and a list in the General's own handwriting, in which the names of the inspector-general and major-generals stand thus:

Inspector-General,	Alexander Hamilton.	
Major-General,	Charles C. Pinckney.	
Ditto,	Henry Knox.	
Ditto,	Henry Lee,	For the Provisional Army.
Ditto,	Edward Hand,	

Then follow the names of old officers from whom to select brigadiers, &c., and unfortunately among those for brigadiers was that of William S. Smith, the President's son in-law. It was concluded yesterday to nominate Mr. Dayton (the Speaker of the

House) adjutant-general, with the rank of brigadier-general, but I believe the President has changed his mind, and will appoint Dayton 3d brigadier, and Smith 4th, with the office of adjutant-general. Your nomination stands first as above,—thus:—A. Hamilton of New-York, inspector-general, with the rank of major-general. I deprecate the appointment of Smith, which will injure the President in two ways; 1st, because he is the President's son-in-law, for this will be contrasted with General Washington's caution to steer clear of his relations; 2d, because Smith is a bankrupt; and if I am rightly informed, *with a ruined reputation.*

I have not time now to add, but that I am as ever, sincerely yours, &c.

P. S.—I wish the Senate, after passing on the inspector-general and major-general, may postpone all the brigadiers till next session in autumn. Then perhaps a better arrangement may be made. Pardon me for repudiating exceedingly the idea of your being made subordinate to Knox. Nobody ever thought of such a thing.

HAMILTON TO DUPORTAIL.

New-York, July 23, 1798.

My Dear General:

Though it is a great while since I have heard from you, I have not ceased to inquire after you, and I shall never cease to interest myself in your welfare.

You have seen the progress of things between this country and France; and you must have made reflections on your own situation. I am aware that the idea of your entering in any way into the military service of this country, on such an occasion, is one of great delicacy, and opposed by many motives. But knowing your opinion, as to the revolution and revolutionary leaders of your country, I have thought it not wholly impossible, that

such an idea would not be entirely disagreeable to you; and I am desirous of ascertaining, in the most scrupulous confidence, the state of your mind on this point. The subject may divide itself into employment *in the field*, and employment out of the field.

When I take the liberty to sound you on this head, I ought to assure you, as is truly the case, that the step is wholly from the suggestion of my own mind, and that I am altogether at a loss to conjecture, whether those who must decide the matter would be at all disposed to avail themselves of your services.

I pray you nevertheless to open to me freely your heart on this point, in the fullest reliance upon my prudence, honor, and delicacy. If it were not to intrude too much upon you, I would request you to favor me with a digested plan of an establishment for a military school. This is an object I have extremely at heart.

Yours with true esteem and regard, &c.

PICKERING TO JAY.

PHILADELPHIA, July 28, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have this moment received your letter of the 18th. By the newspapers which go hence this morning, you will see your wishes respecting Colonel Hamilton gratified. At the head of the appointments he is inspector-genera with the rank of major-general. This was intended to place him next in command to Gen. Washington, yet I feel some solicitude about the effect. Under circumstances not dissimilar in the American war, I believe some staff officers, not taken *from the line*, were resisted in their claims to command officers of inferior rank in the line. I wish, therefore, that the act of Congress, authorizing the appointment of an "inspector-general with the rank of major-general," had been explicit; that the inspector-general might be appointed from among those who should be major-generals, or that some mode had been devised to remove all doubt of Colonel Hamilton's right to command all the major-generals under the law as it stands. I take very kindly the communication of your sentiments in this matter, and shall feel my obligations increased with the future communication of your ideas and opinions on every subject involving the safety, the interest,

and the happiness of our country. But, although I deem so lowly of my own discernment in such weighty concerns as to render such communications from you and other eminent citizens peculiarly grateful, yet, on the present occasion, I cannot withhold the pleasure of showing you the perfect coincidence of our thoughts, by presenting you with a copy of my letter of the 6th instant, to Gen. Washington. Colonel Hamilton arrived here the next morning, and in the freedom and confidence with which we conversed, I handed it to him to peruse. General Washington's answer of the 11th, I received the 16th, and sent to Colonel Hamilton extracts, to show the current of the General's reasoning; concluding with an expression of my hopes, that as he (Colonel Hamilton) had in the war for our independence devoted his talents to enhance another's glory, so he would not withhold them now that the preservation of that independence demanded their fullest exertions. After that, Mr. McHenry returned, and informed me that Gen. Washington was some time balancing between the priority of Col. Hamilton and General Pinckney; weighing the high respectability and importance of the latter in the three Southern States, against the superior talents of the former; the latter finally preponderating. Perhaps the observations in my letter of the 6th, which I perceive General Washington did not communicate to McHenry, might have turned the scale. I send you herein the General's answer, which I will thank you to return. I was rejoiced that the Senate had the fortitude to put a decided negative on the President's nomination of his son-in-law, William S. Smith, to be adjutant-general with the rank of brigadier. When I saw that the President was *invincibly* bent on the nomination, I did not hesitate to inform a number of Senators of it, and to urge their negative for the honor, and even for the safety, of the army. The President did not know that Colonel S. was * * * * * * and that he had totally mistaken his military talents. I spoke to so many, and with so little reserve, that I thought it not probable that my interference would eventually be known to the President; but I chose to hazard his displeasure, rather than the approbation of that nomination. Unfortunately, General Washington had arranged the name of Colonel Smith among the candidates for the office of a brigadier. I am aware the step I took was a delicate one, and even its propriety may perhaps be questioned. If the candidate in question had not been so nearly connected with the President, and if the latter had not so peremptorily pronounced the eulogium of the former as a great military character, and in a tone to forbid any reply, it would have become me to have frankly stated my opinion of his true character, and total unworthiness and unfitness to fill that important place. If, in taking the other course, I have done wrong, my motives I hope will make my apology with you, and some others, whose good opinions are peculiarly dear to me.

With true respect, I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

July 29th, 1798.

My Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 14th inst. did not reach me till after the appointments mentioned in it were made.

I see clearly, in what has been done, a new mark of your confidence, which I value as I ought to do.

With regard to the delicate subject of the relative rank of the major-generals, it is very natural for me to be a partial judge, and it is not very easy for me to speak upon it. If I know myself, however, this at least I may say, that were I convinced of injustice being done to others in my favor, I should not hesitate even to volunteer a correction of it, as far as my consent would avail. But, in a case like this, am I not to take the opinion of others as my guide? If I am, the conclusion is that the gentlemen concerned ought to acquiesce. It is a fact, of which there is a flood of evidence, that a real majority of leading federal men were of opinion that, in the event of your declining the command of the army, it ought to devolve upon me, and that in case of your acceptance, which every body ardently desired, the place of second in command ought to be mine.

It is not for me to examine the justness of this opinion. The illusions of self-love might be expected too easily to give it credit with me. But, finding it to exist, am I at liberty to seek to postpone myself to others, in whose hands, according to that opinion, the public interests would be less well confided? Such are the reflections which would have determined me to let the business take its course.

My own opinion at the same time is, that of the two gentlemen postponed to me, the cause of complaint, if any, applies emphatically to General Knox. His rank in the army was much higher than that either of Pinckney or myself. Pinckney's pretensions, on the score of real service, are not extensive; those of Knox are far greater. Pinckney has, no doubt, studied tactics with great care and assiduity, but it is not presumable that he is as well versed in the tactics of a general as Knox.

Pinckney's rank, at the close of the war, was nominally greater than mine; it was, indeed, of more ancient date. But when, in the year 1777, the regiments of artillery were multiplied, I had good reason to expect that the command of one of them would have fallen to me, had I not changed my situation; and this, in all probability, would have led farther. I am aware, at the same time, that there were accidental impediments to Pinckney's progress in preferment; but an accurate comparison would, I imagine, show, that on the score of rank merely, the claim of superiority on his part is not strongly marked. As to military service, I venture to believe, that the general understanding of the late army would allow a considerable balance to me.

As to civil services since the war, I am extremely mistaken if in the minds of federal men there is any comparison between us. The circumstances of the moment, it is true, gave him a certain eclat; but judicious men reduce the merit to the two points of prudent forbearance, and the firmness not to sacrifice his country by base compliances. In all this, it is very far from my inclination to detract from General Pinckney. I have a sincere regard for him, and hold him in high estimation. At the same time, endeavoring to view the matter with all the impartiality my situation permits, I must conclude that General Pinckney, on a fair estimate of all circumstances, ought to be well satisfied with the arrangement.

After saying thus much, I will add, that regard to the public interest is ever predominant with me—that if the gentlemen concerned are dissatisfied, and the service destined to suffer by the preference given to me, I stand ready to submit our relative pretensions to an impartial decision, and to waive the preference. It shall never be said, with any color of truth, that my ambition or interest has stood in the way of public good.

Thus, sir, have I opened my heart to you with as little reserve as to myself, willing, rather, that its weaknesses should appear, than that I should be deficient in frankness. I will only add, that I do not think it necessary to make public beforehand the ultimate intention I have now disclosed.

It is possible the difficulties anticipated may not arise. But,

my dear sir, there is a matter of far greater moment than all this, which I must do violence to my friendship, by stating to you, but of which it is essential you should be apprised. It is, that my friend McHenry is wholly insufficient for his place, with the additional misfortune, of not having the least suspicion of the fact. This, generally, will not surprise you, when you take into view the large scale upon which he is now to act. But you, perhaps, may not be aware of the whole extent of the insufficiency. It is so great as to leave no probability that the business of the War Department can make any tolerable progress in his hands. This has been long observed, and has been more than mentioned to the President by members of Congress.

He is not insensible, I believe, that the execution of the department does not produce the expected results; but the case is, of course, delicate and embarrassing.

My real friendship for McHenry concurring with my zeal for the service, predisposed me to aid him in all that he could properly throw upon me, and I thought that he would have been glad in the organization of the army, and in the conduct of the recruiting service, to make me useful to him. With this view, I came to this city; and I previously opened the way, as far as I could with the least decency. But the idea has thus far been very partially embraced, and to-morrow or next day I shall return to New-York without much fruit of my journey. I mention this purely to apprise you of the course of things, and the probable results.

It is to be regretted, that the supposition of co-operation between the Secretary of War and the principal military officers will unavoidably throw upon the latter a part of the blame which the ill success of the operations of the War Department may be expected to produce. Thus, you perceive, sir, your perplexities are begun.

Most respectfully and affectionately,

I have the honor to remain, Sir, &c.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have concluded to write a

letter, of which the inclosed is the copy. This effort to save a man I value, and promote the service, has, under the circumstances, cost something to my delicacy.

Mr. Harper, of the House of Representatives, is desirous of being in your family. He is a man of very considerable talents, and has the temper of a soldier. The shade to his useful qualities is vanity; but I think the good much outweighs the ill. Pardon this liberty in a point so delicate.

New-York, August 1st, 1798.

The above was written at Philadelphia; but a pressing call to this place, added to occupation there, prevented my being able to copy and forward it till now.

Give me leave to suggest the expediency of your asking of McHenry a statement of all the military supplies, cannon, arms, &c., which are already provided, and of the means and measures provided and in execution for augmenting the quantity. This will give you necessary information, and prompt to exertion.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

August 6th, 1798.

My Dear Sir:

You are probably apprised, that in announcing to the general officers their appointments, they are told that the emoluments are to be suspended until called into actual service, and that, as a consequence of this plan, they are to remain inactive.

This project suits admirably my private arrangements, by leaving me to pursue, in full extent, my profession. But I believe it accords neither with the intention of the individuals who framed the laws, nor with the good of the service. It is impossible for McHenry to get through all that is now upon his hands in a manner honorable to himself, satisfactory to the public, or proportioned to the energy of the conjuncture. You will see by

the inclosed, that I have sacrificed my delicacy to my friendship and public zeal. I have heard nothing in reply. I thought it expedient that you and Colonel Pickering should understand, in confidence, the situation of things. Without a change of plan, they will not go, and the government, and all concerned, will be discredited.

HAMILTON TO GEN. DAYTON.

NEW-YORK, August 6th, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received, at Philadelphia, your letter of the 27th July, the answer to which has been delayed by excessive occupation.

You know I trust sufficiently my sentiments of you, not to need being told how much pleasure your appointment gave me, and how highly I value the confidence you express in me.

It will probably be unexpected to you to be told that I am not yet in the exercise of the functions of my military office, and that my participation in the preliminary arrangements is only occasional, and very limited.

Such, however, is the course of the plan which has been adopted by the Executive.

But I have, notwithstanding, had conversations with the Secretary at War on the points you mention, and to the extent of my opportunity have endeavored to promote a right direction. You no doubt have before this received a letter from the Secretary on the subject of proper characters for officers. It seems to be determined, in his mind, to appoint Col. Aaron Ogden to the command of a regiment.

Every body must consider him as a great acquisition in this station. The part of your letter which respects him, announcing the certainty of his acceptance, was particularly grateful to me.

Inclosed you will receive instructions for the recruiting service, which were previously prepared by the Secretary at War. I made such remarks upon them as hastily occurred. Examine them

carefully, and suggest to me whatever amendments or additions may present themselves to you. You will oblige me by free communications at all times.

HAMILTON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

New-York, August 7th, 1798.

Dear Sir:

Capt. Robert Hamilton, a first cousin of mine, is desirous of employment in this country in the line of his profession. He is regularly bred to the sea, which he has followed since he was fourteen years old, and has had the best opportunities of improvement—among others that of voyages to the East Indies. He has also commanded a ship, and has acted as supercargo. I venture with confidence to recommend him as well qualified, and every way worthy; adding to skill in his profession, the sentiments of a gentleman, good morals, intelligence and prudence. I interest myself very much in his success, and shall esteem it as a personal favor to myself whatever may be done for his interest.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(private.)

Mount Vernon, 9th August, 1798.

My Dear Sir:

By the same post which brought me your favor, began in Philadelphia and ended in New-York the 1st instant, I received a letter from General Knox, dated the 29th ult., in answer to one I had written him on the 16th of that month. In confidence, and as a proof of my frankness and friendship, I send both of

them to you, together with my reply of this date; which, after reading, be so good as to return to me.

Giving you the perusal of this correspondence, supersedes the necessity of my going into further details on the subject of relative rank; except, if the commissions are yet to issue, and it be practicable at this time, and consistent also, I should not be indisposed (so far as my agency in the business extends), if that would satisfy General Knox, to make him the senior of General Pinckney. But, as the President is absent—and it might have been the understanding of the Senate that the latter should be first—the propriety of the change, unless it could be effected with the consent of General Pinckney, might at least be questioned. Though, upon more mature reflection, I do not see upon what principle he could object. I have a high opinion of General Pinckney's qualifications as an officer, and his integrity as a man, but under the impression I am that the southern hemisphere will be the grand theatre of action, I shall honestly confess that my primary object in gratifying him, is, that he may come forward with all his force.

Your opinion respecting the unfitness of a certain gentleman for the office he holds, accords with mine, and it is to be regretted, *sorely*, at this time, that these opinions are so well founded. I early discovered after he entered upon the duties of his office, that his talents were unequal to great exertions or deep resources. In truth they were not expected; for the fact is, it was a Hobson's choice. But such is the case, and what is to be done?

I am held in the most profound ignorance of every step that has been taken since he left this place; and but for other letters which I have been obliged to have ready for this day's post, I should have written very seriously to him on several matters highly interesting to me, if I am to be called to the field; and that which you have mentioned among the rest. I am not at this moment made acquainted with a single step that is taken to appoint an officer, or recruit a man, or where the rendezvouses are. Numberless applications have been made to me to recommend for commissions, and such as appeared to have merit I forwarded, but know nothing of the result.

Let me hope that you will be able to devote a good deal of your time to the business of recruiting *good* men—and the choice of *good* officers. It is all important. I will endeavor to impress him with the propriety of requiring your assistance in these matters; and of the necessity of making you the full allowance of pay, &c., for these services. By bringing you thus in contact a thousand other matters will fall in of course. Delicacy, if matters become serious, must yield to expediency. The stake we play for is too great to be trifled with.

Mr. Harper has been presented to my consideration before, as an aid-de-camp—but as I have no use for my military family until matters are more matured, I am unwilling to be embarrassed by engagements. My aids, as you well know, must be men of business, and *ought* to be officers of experience. Many, very many *young* gentlemen of the first families in the country, have offered their services; and all have received one answer to the above effect. Indeed, in the choice of my aids, a variety of considerations must combine—political, geographical, &c., as well as experience.

What is become of Walker? Colonel Heth has offered, and stands well in my estimation without a promise. No foreigner will be admitted as a member of my family, while I retain my present ideas; nor do I think they ought to be in any situation where they can come at secrets and betray a trust.

Write me as often as you can conveniently; and believe me to be, what I really am,

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO M'HENRY.

(PRIVATE.)

NEW-YORK, August 19, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I write you herewith an official letter. Your private one of the 14th is before me. I regret that you have been unwell, and rejoice that you are better.

The affair of Gen. Knox perplexes me. I wish him to serve. I am pained to occasion to him pain, for I have truly a warm side for him, and a high value for his merits; but my judgment tells me, and all I consult confirms it, that I cannot reasonably postpone myself in a case in which a preference so important to the public in its *present* and future consequences, has been given me. In denominating the preference important, I do not intend to judge whether it will be well or ill founded; in either case, its tendency is so important, I am willing to confer, to adjust amicably, with the advice of mutual friends. But how can I abandon my pretension?

At foot, my dear sir, I transmit you the draft of such a reply as it seems to me proper for you to make to General Knox. It may also be well for you, in a private letter, to advise him to accept, with a reservation of his claim *ad referendum*, upon the ground of the rule he quotes, and with the understanding that it will not be understood to engage him to continue, if the matter be not finally settled according to his claim.

Adieu, my dear Sir.

Yours very truly, &c.

Draft above referred to.

SIR:

An answer to your letter of the 5th inst. has been delayed by some degree of ill health on my part.

The general disposition it marks, accords well with the patriotic sentiments you have so constantly manifested. It is extremely regretted that any circumstance should induce you to hesitate about the acceptance of an appointment in which it is not to be doubted your services would be eminently useful.

The paragraph of my former letter which you quote, explains to you my conception of the relative rank of the generals in question, as resulting from the order of the nominations and appointments This conception, however, cannot affect the claim of either, if there be any subsisting, binding rule in our military code, which will arrange the priority of rank between officers nominated on the same day, according to their relative stations in the late army. This will naturally be the subject of some future decision, in some proper mode. It is not understood that there has been any formal repeal of the rule to which you allude.

It remains, then, for you to determine whether you will or not accept the appointment, with the reservation of a claim to the benefit of that rule.

With great consideration and esteem,

I have the honor to remain, Sir,

Your very obedient servant.

HAMILTON TO M^cHENRY.

NEW-YORK, August 19, 1798.

SIR:

An absence from the city, upon some urgent avocations, prevented my receiving till yesterday your letters of the 10th and 11th instant.

I observe the suggestion which you have made to the President towards calling General Knox and myself into immediate service. If he shall approve, I stand ready to execute, in the best manner I shall be able, whatever business may be confided to me; but I must earnestly hope that it will not be attended with the necessity of an immediate change of residence. The nature of my arrangements would render this absolutely ruinous to me, and I trust I shall not be reduced to such an alternative, unless events portending public danger shall ripen faster than, according to present appearances, they are likely to do. I do not object to a frequent attendance at the seat of government, for this can be reconciled with my other engagements, till they can be gradually prepared for a total relinquishment and a new position. With this, I am satisfied, every desirable end can be obtained, especially when the promptness of communication between this place and the seat of government is considered. Be assured that none but very imperious motives could induce this hesitation on my part. In accepting the appointment, I did not contemplate as probable a speedy dislocation of residence.

The tenor of General Knox's letter, transmitted by you and now returned, occasions to me no small regret and embarrassment. My esteem and friendship for that gentleman would lead

me far, but there is a very great difficulty in waiving a station to which, I am well convinced, I have been called no less by the public voice of this country than by the acts of the Commander-in-Chief and of the President and Senate. The intention as to the relative grades of the officers appointed is presumed to be unequivocal. It is believed that the rule to which General Knox refers can have no application to the case of the formation of a new army at a new epoch, embracing officers not previously *in actual* service.

It was not a permanent provision of law, but a regulation adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the late army, and governing, as far as I recollect, only in the cases of promotions from lower subsisting grades to higher ones. At the same time, it is very delicate for me to give an opinion in a matter in which I am so personally interested.

I send you back the list of applications which you transmitted to me, with remarks, and with the addition of names. It has been in my power to do little as to candidates in any State but New-York. I have supposed that you have had recourse to better sources of information as to others.

With great respect and esteem,
I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your very obedient servant, &c.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

New-York, August 20th, 1798.

My Dear Sir:

A necessary absence from this city prevented the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, till yesterday.

It is very grateful to me to discover in each succeeding occurrence a new mark of your friendship towards me. Time will evince that it makes the impression it ought on my mind.

The effect which the course of the late military appointments

has produced in General Knox, though not very unexpected, is very painful to me. I have a respectful sense of his pretensions as an officer, and I have a warm personal regard for him. My embarrassment is not inconsiderable between these sentiments, and what I owe to a reasonable conduct on my own part, both in respect to myself and to the public. It is a fact, that a number of the most influential men in our affairs would think that in waiving the preference given to me I acted a weak part, in a personal view, and an unwarrantable one, in a public view; and General Knox is much mistaken if he does not believe that this sentiment would emphatically prevail in that region to which he supposes his character most interesting. I mean New England.

Yet, my dear sir, I can never consent to see you seriously compromitted or embarrassed. I shall cheerfully place myself in your disposal, and facilitate any arrangement you may think for the general good. It does not, however, seem necessary to precipitate any thing. It may be well to see first what part Gen. Pinckney will act when he arrives.

The Secretary at War has sent me a copy of General Knox's letter to him on the subject of his appointment. It does not absolutely decline, but implies the intention to do it, unless a rule of the late army, giving, in cases of promotion on the same day, priority according to the former relative rank, is understood to govern. I have addressed a reply of which a copy is inclosed.

The commissions have issued, so that no alteration can now be made as between Generals Knox and Pinckney, if there were not the serious difficulties in the way which you seem to have anticipated.

The Secretary of War has proposed to the President a change of the plan announced in the first instance—which may bring into immediate activity the Inspector-General and Gen. Knox. In this case you may depend on the best efforts in my power, with a peculiar attention to the objects you mention, and you shall be carefully and fully advised of whatever it interests you to know.

Col. Walker resides at present in the western part of this

State. He is occupied in some important agencies for persons abroad, which renders it doubtful whether he would now accept military employment. He has been written to, and will be proposed for the command of a regiment.

Heth is, in many respects, very desirable, in the capacity you mention. But you are aware, I presume, of the impracticability of his temper.

With the most respectful and affectionate attachment, I have the honor to remain, &c.

The papers sent by you are now returned.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

(CONFIDENTIAL.)

TRENTON, August 21st, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

Not to miss the mail, I wrote you one line to-day, and inclosed a letter from, I suppose, General Miranda. If its contents give rise to any questions which it will be prudent for you to ask, and for me to answer by the mail, it may be done; otherwise, the information may be suspended till we meet. Just before I left Philadelphia, I received a letter from General Knox, in answer to one I had written at the request of Captain Mitchell, of the artillery, who wished to be one of his aids-de-camp. Mitchell, you will have observed, is since dead. But my object in noticing this matter is to inform you that General Knox manifests pretty strongly his dissatisfaction at your being appointed in a manner to precede him in the military line. I conclude he will not serve. Although I should have been well pleased with his accepting his commission, I do not by any means deem his loss irreparable. Although by the delay of the nominations one day, I received your letter, expressing your willingness to serve under Knox, yet I concealed it, in order

that the arrangement of nominations of major-generals, which I had seen as formed by General Washington, and which I saw would govern, might leave you where you ought to be. In the first place, in General Washington's answer to my letter, of which I sent you some extracts, there is not, as I recollect, the most distant idea of General Knox's making any difficulty in acting subordinately to you. His apprehensions arose wholly on General Pinckney's account. I think it right to add, that from the first moment that a commander-in-chief was thought of, no name was mentioned but yours; for, until the nomination was actually made, I had no suspicion that General Washington would ever again enter the field of war. I know, also, that not only all your friends, but your political enemies, have the highest respect for your abilities; while the latter, the political enemies also of General Knox, estimate his talents by a very moderate scale, and some persons have, in my hearing, called him a weak man. I think him neither *weak* nor *great*, but with pretty good abilities, possessing an imposing manner that impresses an idea of mental faculties beyond what really exist. I am certain that if he had been second to General Washington, and of course likely to command in chief, great dissatisfaction would have been excited. I much doubt, even, whether the nomination would have been confirmed by the Senate. I write this letter in the confidence of friendship for the public good, which I conceive to be involved in your holding your present superior station. I have always supposed you and General Knox to be cordial friends. I wish you to continue such. I persuade myself he is too good a patriot to suffer the present disappointment to actuate him to any improper conduct, and that he will at last positively acquiesce. I think he will *gain* no honor by declining to serve under you. I rather think his refusal will detract from the reputation he now possesses. Mr. Wolcott showed me (as you requested) your letter to him, suggesting the expediency of calling you and General Knox into immediate service, to aid the arrangements and operations of the department of war. I was so well pleased with the idea, and thought it so important, or rather so essential to the formation of an army in time to afford

some security to our country, that I told Mr. Wolcott I would write to the President and urge the measure. Mr. Wolcott approved; I have yet no answer. The Secretary of War was at the time indisposed; but inquiring of his chief clerk, I found that he also had written for the same purpose. It is since this that I received General Knox's letter before mentioned, and that gave rise to a new thought,—that as he manifestly intended to decline accepting his commission, and the President would be on the spot to converse with him, the taking charge of the war department again might be proposed to him; for the President, I have seen, has been informed of a very general dissatisfaction in its present direction. After the appointments of general officers were made, but before they were known beyond Philadelphia, I received a letter from Mr. Jay, expressing the same opinion respecting you, which I had done to General Washington, and the same reasons (the nature of the war in which we were to be engaged) why superior talents should be sought for without regard to rank in a former war. I therefore made Mr. Jay acquainted with my conduct in the business.

P. S. *August 22d.* Since writing the inclosed, I have turned to Mr. Jay's letter; his words are, "I cannot conceal from you my solicitude that the late Secretary of the Treasury may be brought forward in a manner corresponding with his talents and services. It appears to me that his former military station and character, taken in connection with his late important place in the administration, would justify measuring his rank by his merit and value." The reason of Mr. Jay's solicitude is thus expressed: "We shall probably have very different generals to contend with from those which Britain sent here last war, and we should have very different ones to oppose them from several of those who then led our troops." This, you may recollect, is the same sentiment which I expressed in my letter to General Washington which I showed you. In a subsequent letter Mr. Jay joined me in regretting that the terms of the nomination and appointment left any room to question your right of precedence; I mentioned the point to you, but you answered that it had been set-

tled in the case of Baron Steuben. No doubt you have seen some paragraphs in the Columbian Centinel (B. Russell's fulsome paper), in which it is said that General Knox is next in command to General Washington. And a letter from the President to the Secretary of War (in answer, I suppose, to his for calling you and Knox into service) expresses *that* to be his opinion; and consequently, "that Pinckney must rank before Hamilton;" but that is not the only consequence; Lee and Hand were on the *same day* named, and approved as major-generals; and if Knox and Pinckney precede you, so will the other two, for I cannot see that their being named for the provisional army can make any difference when that army shall be raised; and are you prepared for a station so much in the rear? God forbid that such an arrangement should be adopted. But the matter will rest on "General Washington's opinion and consent," and it is for this reason principally that I have added this postscript, that you may take such steps with the General, as you may think proper, to fix you in the station which the essential interests of our country require; the station in which I conceive the General meant to place you, according to the list which he sent by McHenry to the President, and in conformity with which you, Pinckney, and Knox, were named. I have just read the General's answer to my letter about you; he does not hint an idea of any competition save with *Pinckney*. I inclose it for your perusal, and to be returned. If North declines, the President is "prepared to appoint another and a better." Is this Harry Jackson, or Cobb? Colonel William Heth of Virginia would joyfully take that office. But the appointment of A. W. White has grievously offended him.

Sincerely adieu,

T. PICKERING.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, August 22d, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your several letters of May 12th, June the 6th and 8th, have regularly come to hand.

You will be, no doubt, fully instructed of the measures which have taken place on the part of our government, and you will have seen in the numerous addresses to the President a confirmation of the opinion I gave you respecting the disposition of the country. From both you will have derived satisfaction, though you should not think we are *yet* where we ought now to be. But console yourself with the assurance that we are progressing in good. The indications are to my mind conclusive, that we are approaching fast to as great unanimity as any country ever experienced, and that our energies will be displayed in proportion to whatever exigencies shall arise.

I have received several letters from General Miranda. I have written an answer to some of them, which I send you to deliver or not, according to your estimate of what is passing in the scene where you are. Should you deem it expedient to suppress my letter, you may do it, and say as much as you think fit on my part in the nature of a communication through you.

With regard to the enterprise in question, I wish it much to be undertaken, but I should be glad that the principal agency was in the United States, they to furnish the whole land force if necessary. The command in this case would very naturally fall upon me; and I hope I should disappoint no favorable anticipations. The independency of the separate territory under a moderate government, with the joint guarantee of the co-operating powers, stipulating equal privileges in commerce, would be the sum of the results to be accomplished.

Are we yet ready for this undertaking? Not quite. But we ripen fast, and it may, I think, be rapidly brought to maturity, if an efficient negotiation for the purpose is at once set on

foot upon this ground. Great Britain cannot alone insure the accomplishment of the object. I have some time since advised certain preliminary steps to prepare the way consistently with national character and justice. I was told they would be pursued, but I am not informed whether they have been or not.

Yours affectionately, &c.

HAMILTON TO MIRANDA.

NEW-YORK, August 22d, 1798.

SIR:

I have lately received by duplicates your letter of the 6th of April, with the postscript of the 9th of June. The gentleman you mention in it has not made his appearance to me, nor do I know of his arrival in this country; so that I can only divine the object from the limits in your letter.

The sentiments I entertain with regard to that object, have been long since in your knowledge, but I could personally have no participation in it, unless patronized by the government of this country. It was my wish that matters had been ripened for a co-operation in the course of this fall on the part of this country.

But this can now scarcely be the case. The winter, however, may mature the project, and an effectual co-operation by the United States may take place. In this case I shall be happy, in my official station, to be an instrument of so good a work.

The plan in my opinion ought to be—a fleet of Great Britain, an army of the United States, a government for the liberated territory agreeable to both the co-operators, about which there will be no difficulty. To arrange the plan a competent authority from Great Britain to some person here, is the best expedient. Your presence here will, in this case, be extremely essential.

We are raising an army of about twelve thousand men.

General Washington has resumed his station at the head of our armies. I am appointed second in command.

With esteem and regard,

I remain, dear Sir, &c.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, August 22, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

No one knows better than yourself, how difficult and oppressive is the collection even of taxes very moderate in their amount, if there be a defective circulation. According to all the phenomena which fall under my notice, this is our case in the interior parts of the country.

Again; individual capitalists, and consequently the facility of direct loans, are not very extensive in the United States. The banks can only go a certain length, and not be forced. Yet government will stand in need of large anticipations.

For these and other reasons, which I have thought well of, I have come to a conclusion, that our Treasury ought to raise up a circulation of its own. I mean by the issuing of Treasury notes payable, some on demand, others at different periods, from very short to pretty considerable,—at first having but little time to run.

This appears to me an expedient, equally necessary to keep the circulation full, and to facilitate the anticipations which government will certainly need. By beginning early, the public eye will be familiarized, and as emergencies press, it will be easy to enlarge without hazard to credit.

Think well of this suggestion, and do not discard it without perceiving well a better substitute.

Adieu.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

August 22, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

In writing freely as I have done yesterday and to-day in the inclosed letter to you, disclosing what is contemplated respecting your military station, far from being apprehensive of justly incurring blame, I consider myself as performing a hazardous duty; but I am not conscious that the risk of incurring the displeasure of any man ever deterred me from doing what I conceived to be my duty. My anxiety to see you fixed second in command, has arisen from the opinion which for twenty years I have entertained of your superior genius and talents combined with integrity. The integrity of your competitors, I trust, is also unimpeachable. General Pinckney's character I believe to be eminently pure, and were their other qualifications equal, my solicitude would cease. Nay, there would be an evident propriety in their preceding you.

My interference has not proceeded from any claims you have on my friendship; for though we were never, to my knowledge, for one moment at enmity, our acquaintance was never so intimate as in the proper strict sense of the word to make us friends. My respect, esteem and attachment have been founded on the qualities of your head and heart as above suggested; and all the return I expected was, the regard due simply to an *honest man*. Viewing me as entitled to this character, you will not, nor would any one who knew as well as you my frank, downright disposition, ascribe to flattery the sentiments I have expressed of you in our correspondence. It was impossible to reason the subject without expressing them. Thus much I have thought proper to add in justification, and as an apology for the inclosed, and for any similar sentiments in former letters.

P. S.—I postpone sending General Washington's letter. I may want it in conversing with my colleagues before the question of rank shall be referred to the General.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

TRENTON, August 23d, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. McHenry has just handed to Mr. Wolcott and me his letter to the President on the subject of calling you and General Knox into immediate service, together with General Knox's letter to him in answer to the one inclosing his commission. General Knox's letter claiming the first rank, I see has been transmitted to you; and I was glad to see you, in your answer to the Secretary of War, tenacious of the station in which the Commander-in-Chief, the President and Senate, and the public voice have placed you. I did not know till now, that General Washington had so explicitly written you respecting your taking rank of General Knox, *whom he loved*, although I had formed the same conclusion from his *silence* concerning him in his letter to me, which I now inclose, and which Mr. Wolcott only, of my colleagues, has seen. The original letter from General Washington to you, McHenry now informs us, was by him shown to the President; notwithstanding which you have seen where you would have been placed. McHenry said also, that General Washington made your appointment to be the *sine qua non* of his accepting the chief command. The weight of these facts seems to have escaped the President's recollection, or he would not desire that General Knox should take rank of you. It is plain that General Knox has conversed with him, referred to the rule of the former war to determine the relative rank of officers of the same grade, appointed on the same day, and the President has thence concluded Knox is "legally" entitled to the precedency. But, as I yesterday informed you, the change proposed to gratify General Knox and the President, is by the latter put on General Washington's "opinion and consent," and such consent, surely, can never be given after the General's letter to you, in which, as McHenry says, he explicitly told you, that he passed by Knox whom he

loved, to give you the priority of rank. Upon the principle mentioned by General Knox, *Hand* must clearly precede you as well as Knox and Pinckney. Lee, I presume, must follow you, as he was only a captain of horse when you, as aid to the Commander-in-Chief, had the rank of lieutenant-colonel. I see in your letter to McHenry, you refer to the *public voice* in your favor—and justly, as I yesterday mentioned. Yet the President imagines that "the *five* New England States" would be offended at your preceding Knox. He is most egregiously mistaken; it was among New England members of Congress that I heard you, and you only, mentioned as the Commander-in-Chief, until General Washington was nominated; and I dare to say, that if among the New England delegates a vote were taken, nine in ten, if not the whole, would place you before Knox.

McHenry is to write you to-day on the subject. He is utterly uninformed of my correspondence with General Washington and you concerning it. The reference of the matter to General Washington is suspended. You will consider whether it should not be made; for he must decide in your favor. McHenry had thought of not so referring it, but of taking the course which he said he would state to you to-day—that is, to propose to General Knox to accept with a reservation of his claim under the old rule appealed to by him; at the same time, McHenry says that rule is not now in force, nor ought to govern. Why, then, urge General Knox's acceptance on that ground? It would be a delusive proposition to General Knox—and if it did not eventually prove so to him, you would be in a predicament to excite the extreme regret of the great body of your fellow-citizens, who would the more deeply deplore the arrangement from the very possible fall or other inevitable loss of the present Commander-in-Chief.

STODDART TO HAMILTON.

TRENTON, August 24th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I should have replied to your letter of the 8th instant, before this time, had it not mentioned your intention of setting out on a journey. I am since honored with yours of the 21st.

I have no motive but truth in saying that there is no man, known to me by character only, to whose wishes I would pay so much respect as yours. That I think you have such claims on this country, and this government, that to insure the appointment of a gentleman to be a lieutenant in our navy, it should be sufficient to know it would oblige you. Anticipating that objections might be made in New-York to Capt. Hamilton, on the score of his being a foreigner, I had turned my attention to the Southward, for an appointment for him, and I lamented that a lieutenant had already been mentioned to the President for the Montezuma, of 20 guns, at Baltimore. Two more vessels are preparing there of 18 9-pounders, and one of larger size at Charleston. To one of these, I suppose, there would be no difficulty in appointing him first lieutenant. To the South there are but few qualified men for the navy, of course less competition. The middle and eastern States are able—at least it seems to be thought so—to furnish officers for our navy. If, however, you prefer that Captain Hamilton should be mentioned to the President, for the frigate at New-York, I will, with the utmost pleasure, exert my influence for his appointment. In this case, presuming you know Capt. Talbot, it might obviate objections, if he also would desire it.

I have the honor to be, with real respect and esteem, &c.

HAMILTON TO M'HENRY.

NEW YORK, August 25th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I perceive it would be agreeable to the Commander-in-Chief to receive frequent communications from you, and particularly to understand the state of public supplies, that is, the quantities on hand, and the measures in execution to procure others.

I give you this hint as a guide, and would advise to have a full statement made out, with notes of what is further doing, and send it to him.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

NEW-YORK, August 29th, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 3d instant, came seasonably to hand. Business and absence from this place have delayed the acknowledgment.

The persons you mention have been correspondently placed before the Secretary of War.

As to military affairs, they lag not a little—no appointments of regimental officers yet made. McHenry, as you know, is loaded beyond his strength. It was an obvious idea to derive aid from among general officers. But instead of embracing this recourse, they have all been told that the President hoped they would think it proper to waive the emoluments of their offices till called into actual service.

Steps have been taken towards the correction of this obvious mistake, the success of which now depends on the President, and on that success the alternative of *some* or *no energy*.

Adieu, my dear Sir.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

NEW-YORK, August 29, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your friendly letters of 21st, 22d, and 23d of August, have been duly received. I feel myself at once much flattered and truly indebted for the very favorable opinion of me which you manifest. The good estimation of men of sense and virtue is an ample consolation for the censure and malice of those of a different character; while the expression of your sentiments have all the value which a well-known sincerity and integrity of disposition can give. Be assured that I shall be happy to be ranked by you in the number of your friends. The course of the thing in a particular quarter does not surprise. Besides the direct influence which would be exerted, I am aware that the circumstances of the late election for President have made some unfortunate impressions.

The Commander-in-Chief, I am authorized by his own communications to me to believe, will not easily relinquish the original spirit of the primitive arrangement; but, in the last resort, I shall be inclined to have much deference for his wishes. It is important he should well understand, what I verily believe to be an undoubted fact, that New England would rather see high command in my hands than in those of Gen. Knox.

With very cordial regard and esteem, &c.

HAMILTON TO M'HENRY.

NEW-YORK, September 8th, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Yours, dated by mistake August 6th, I received yesterday. I postponed a reply till to-day, because I wished first to reflect maturely. My mind is unalterably made up. I shall certainly

not hold the commission on the plan proposed, and only wait an official communication to say so.

I return you the inclosures in your letter. You may depend on my fidelity to your friendly confidence. I shall regret whatever of inconvenience may attend you. You doubtless will take care that you retain in your own power all the evidences of this transaction.

Adieu.

M'HENRY TO HAMILTON.

TRENTON, September 10th, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your letter of the 8th this morning; mine to you, to which it was an answer, ought to have been dated the 6th instant.

I do not, I cannot blame you for your determination. Mr. Pickering, Mr. Wolcott, and Mr. Stoddart, have agreed to make a respectful representation on the subject to the President. You will not, of course, hear from me relative to the commands of the President, till the result is known to me.

Yours affectionately, &c.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, September 17th, 1798.

I am charmed with the military appointments. In the main they are quite what they should be. Such chiefs ought to give glory as well as security to their country, and they will do both if the occasions offer. You see that I relapse into my former strain. I know not what you and others, whose sentiments I

respect, may think, but I must unsettle all that is best settled in my opinions of the character of the present extraordinary crisis, or I cannot agree with an unimpassioned, phlegmatic, cautious, inactive, and merely defensive war, even under the highest toned and most vigorous form of government, is capable of affording a tolerable chance of security against such an adversary as France.

I do not entirely comprehend the views and proceedings of Congress, who appear to have done too much, or not enough. But I have been too long acquainted with the temper and composition of that body, not to be able to conjecture the difficulties that arise from the vanities of some, and the obstinacy of others; and which have given the appearance of inconsistency to their measures.

Congress has adjourned, and it is of the highest importance that we should form a correct opinion of the course that France is likely to pursue. It is plain, that discovering our union and firmness, France instantly decided upon relinquishment of her demands of apologies and loans, and resolved to recede as far as should be necessary to regain her standing; and, if possible, her influence among our people. But she has had no intention of doing us justice for the past, nor of performing what she might be induced to promise in respect to the future. The correspondence between Talleyrand and Gerry, inclusive of other extemporaneous and subsequent measures of the same character, should convince us of the justice of this opinion. Logan, who, as we hear, was provided with letters from Jefferson and others, has been presented to Merlin as the envoy of the patriotic party in America. He has been closeted with Talleyrand, and speaks openly of his success with the French government. Since his arrival at Paris, the American seamen have been released, who, on the laying of the embargo, were conducted to prison, and the Directory have ordered the embargo to be raised. The preamble of this arrêt merits attention.

29 Thermidor. Le Directoire executif, considérant que malgré la manifestation hostile du gouvernement des Etats Unis, qui avait determiné un embargo momentané sur leurs batimens, il

doit croire qu'a moins d'être livré aux passions du cabinet Britanique, ce gouvernement fidéle aux intérêts de la *Nation Américaine*, prendra des mesures analogues aux dispositions pacifiques de la république Française dès qu'il en recevra la confirmation, et voulant suivre les habitudes amicales et fraernelles de la France, envers un peuple dont elle a defendu la liberté, arrête ce qui suit, &c. &c." These proceedings should be compared with the treatment and language received by our envoys, and we shall from hence be able perhaps to fathom the views, and to discover the meaning of France. It is analogous to what has been done in other countries. Difficulties and embarrassments, complained of by the proper agents of such countries have been aggravated and increased, and in order to divide the people from their government, promises of redress and satisfaction have been given to the popular agents of such countries which had been refused to the envoys of their governments.

But we know nothing certain of the views of France since it has been known at Paris that our treaties are dissolved. The measures above referred to were of antecedent date. I still think they will not declare war, but endeavor to gain their object by humiliation and intrigue.

The war is on the eve of recommencing between France and Austria. Prussia will remain neuter; Germany will suffer herself to be incorporated with France in preference to being again at war with her. Naples will be engaged, and Russia, according to appearances, will also become active.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

TRENTON, Sept. 19, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I am acqainted with the state of a delicate question in which you personally, but the government and country are more

interested. Measures have been taken to bring all right, if the thing be at all practicable. The present embarrassment might, I am persuaded, have been entirely avoided, and I do not despair of having it corrected. As a friend to your fame, and the interests of the country, I request you to *say nothing*, and *do nothing*, until you hear from me, which will be ten days or a fortnight hence.

Your advice respecting the use of credit has been, and will continue to be, regarded. The finances will not fail before the other departments, but the government will lose all confidence, and will deserve none, if things are not managed with some portion of good sense. There is now no object, system, or design; all is hurry, passion, and imbecility.

Yours.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, September 23, 1798.

You will have no war! France will propose to renew the negotiation upon the basis laid down in the President's instructions to the envoys—at least, so I conjecture.

If the negotiation is recommenced, the most obvious precaution suggests the expediency of confiding it to hands above all suspicion.

We see that we have nothing to fear from the arms of France; all her skill and energy, and resentment, will nevertheless be employed to attain her ends.

A treaty, liberal in terms and stipulations, though neither should be performed nor observed, would gain time, and go a great way to restore her injured credit.

The election of President would return before the efficacy and sincerity of the new stipulations and engagements would be experimentally ascertained. To give them any chance of success, they must be liberal to the utmost bounds of our expectations.

Bonaparte reached Grand Cairo on the 22d July, but we are quite ignorant whether he was opposed by the Beys. It does not yet appear whether he will remain some time in Egypt, in order to consolidate his conquest and authority over that country, or proceed immediately by the Red Sea for India. We are without details or confirmation of the victory which the French papers of the 15th and 16th instant state to have been gained over the French fleet by Nelson. The news is on the whole highly probable, and the victory has, according to these reports, been very decisive and glorious. The war is about to recommence.

WASHINGTON TO ADAMS.

Extract of a letter from General Washington to the President of the United States, dated Mount Vernon, 25th of September, 1798.

It is an invidious task, at all times, to draw comparisons, and I shall avoid it as much as possible; but I have no hesitation in declaring, that if the public is to be deprived of the service of Colonel Hamilton in the military line, that the post he was destined to fill will not be easily supplied; and that this is the sentiment of the public, I think I can venture to pronounce. Although Colonel Hamilton has never acted in the capacity of a general officer, yet his opportunities, as the principal and most confidential aid of the commander-in-chief, afforded him the means of viewing every thing on a larger scale than those who had only divisions and brigades to attend to—who knew nothing of the correspondencies of the commander-in-chief, or of the various orders to, or transactions with, the general staff of the army. These advantages, and his having served with usefulness in the old Congress, in the general Convention, and having filled one of the most important departments of government with acknowledged abilities and integrity, has placed him on high ground, and made him a conspicuous character in the United States, and even in Europe. To these, as matters of no small consideration, may be added, that as a lucrative practice of his profession, his *most certain* dependence, the inducement to relinquish it, must, in some degree, be commensurate.

By some he is considered as an ambitious man, and, therefore, a dangerous one. That he is ambitious, I shall readily grant; but it is of that laudable kind which prompts a man to excel in whatever he takes in hand. He is enterprising,

quick in his perceptions, and his judgment intuitively great; qualities essential to a great military character; and, therefore, I repeat, that his loss will be irreparable.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, September 30, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your obliging favor of the 24th instant, has duly come to hand. I see in it a new proof of sentiments towards me which are truly gratifying. But permit me to add my request to the suggestions of your own prudence, that no personal considerations for me may induce more on your part than on mature reflection you may think due to public motives. It is extremely foreign to my wish to create to you the least embarrassment, especially in times like the present, when it is more than ever necessary that the interests of the *whole* should be *paramountly* consulted.

I shall strictly comply with the recommendation in the close of your letter, remaining always

Your very respectful and affectionate servant.

WASHINGTON TO PICKERING.

(CONFIDENTIAL.)

MOUNT VERNON, 1st October, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

This letter will contain very little more than an acknowledgment of the receipts of your letters of the 13th and 18th of last month, which came safe to hand. The letter written by Mr. Wolcott to the President of the United States and the representation made by me to him, so soon as I received *official* information of the change intended by him, in the relative rank of the major-generals, and of his departure in almost every other instance from what I considered a

solemn compact: and the only terms on which I would, by an acceptance of the commission, hazard every thing dear and valuable to me, will soon bring matters to a close so far as it respects myself. But until the final result of them is known, the less there is said on the subject the better.

With great truth and sincerity, I am always

Your sincere and obedient servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, October 2, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Mr. R. delivered me your letter of the 31st of July. The opinion in that and other of your letters concerning a very important point, has been acted upon by me from the very moment that it became unequivocal that we must have a decisive rupture with France. In some things my efforts succeeded, in others they were disappointed:—in others I have had promises of conformity to lay the foundation of future proceeding; the performance and effect of which promises are not certainly known to me. The effect, indeed, cannot yet be known.

The public mind of this country continues to progress in the right direction. That must influence favorably the present Congress at the ensuing session. The next will be in all appearance intrinsically better.

Of the executive I need say little; you know its *excellent* dispositions, its general character, and the composition of its parts. You know also how widely different the business of government is from the speculation of it, and the energy of the imagination dealing in general propositions from that of *execution* in *detail*.

There are causes from which delay and feebleness are experienced. But difficulty will be surmounted, and I anticipate with you that this country will ere long assume an attitude correspondent with its great destinies—majestic, efficient, and operative of great things. A noble career lies before it.

Why does not Gouverneur Morris come home? His talents

are wanted. Men like him do not superabound. Indeed I wish that you were here rather than where you are, though I think your position an important one at the present juncture. But we want to infuse more abilities into the management of our internal affairs.

Governor Jay is well. He and all your friends continue to take a lively interest in all that concerns you.

Adieu. Yours affectionately.

HAMILTON TO THE COUNT LATOUR DUPIN GOUVION.

NEW-YORK, October 3d, 1798.

I had yesterday, my dear sir, the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 15th of July, accompanied by two others, one for Messrs. Le Roy and Bayard, the other for Mr. Olive, which will be sent to them in the country, where they now continue, in consequence of the sickness in this city. The letters which you mention to have before written, have also been received. To mine I replied shortly after, nor can I imagine how it has happened that you have received no answer from either of the parties.

On the subject of the sale of your farm, Mr. Bayard and myself had a conference, and we agreed that a sale at this time was inexpedient, as it could not be hoped that the farm would bring near its value, owing to the embarrassments in pecuniary operations produced by the prospect of war. I shall, however, now advise that an experiment be made. The offers received, if any, will determine whether a sale can take place without an imprudent sacrifice for you, and the result can be regulated accordingly.

Be assured, my dear sir, that I shall be happy to be useful to you in this or any other matter. In doing so, I shall equally gratify the esteem and friendship with which you have inspired me for yourself, and that lively and affecting interest in whatever

concerns Madame de Gouvion, which cannot but be felt by all who have had an opportunity to know her value.

If it shall conduce to her and your happiness to return to this country, it will certainly add to ours; and if you will, beforehand, apprise me of your resolution, when taken, and your general plan, you will find me zealous to co-operate in giving it effect.

I would invite you to return with the more confidence, from the assurance in the stability of affairs in this country, which is derived from the late happy course of the public mind. An extraordinary union among the people in the support of their own government, and in resistance to all foreign encroachments, leaves nothing to be feared for our future security and prosperity. The most reasonable ideas in every respect prevail.

Accept, whenever you shall come, under the roof of Mrs. Hamilton and myself, an asylum where you may be perfectly at home, until you shall have completed your arrangements for your future establishment. She joins me in cordial remembrance to Madame de Gouvion and yourself.

Believe me always very truly, dear Sir, &c.

ADAMS TO WASHINGTON.

QUINCY, October 9th, 1798.

SIR:

I received yesterday the letter you did me the honor to write me on the 28th September.

You request to be informed whether my determination to reverse the order of the three Major-Generals is final, and whether I mean to appoint another Adjutant-General without your concurrence. I presume that before this day you have received information from the Secretary at War, that I some time ago signed the three commissions, and dated them on the same day, in hopes, similar to yours, that an amicable adjustment or acquiescence might take place among themselves; but if these hopes

should be disappointed, and controversies should arise, they will of course be submitted to you as Commander-in-Chief, and if, after all, any one should be so obstinate as to appeal to me from the judgment of the Commander-in-Chief, I was determined to confirm that judgment; because, whatever construction may be put upon the resolutions of the ancient Congress which have been applied to this case, and whether they are at all applicable to it or not, there is no doubt to be made, that by the present Constitution of the United States the President has authority to determine the rank of officers.

I have been for some time prepared in my own mind to nominate Mr. Dayton to be Adjutant-General in case of the refusal of Mr. North. Several others have occurred and been suggested to me, but none who in point of science or literature, political and military merit or energy of character, appear to be equal to him. I have no exclusive attachment to him or any other. If you have any other in contemplation, I pray you to mention him to the Secretary of War, who may fill up his commission immediately, in case Mr. North declines.

I hope your own health and that of Mrs. Washington are perfect. Mine is very indifferent, and Mrs. Adams's extremely low; confined to the bed of sickness for two months, her destiny is still very precarious, and mine in consequence of it.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

TRENTON, October 10th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

At the close of the last week, or on Monday of this, a letter was received by the Secretary of War from the President, covering the commissions of the Major-Generals, dated on *one day*.

This circumstance, taken in connection with others which preceded, fully justify an opinion, that the rank may be considered as settled in the order in which the appointments were made. Of course that you are established in the rank of first Major-General.

I supposed till yesterday that the commissions had been transmitted by Mr. McHenry, with an official letter, settling the grade. I find, however, that our friend McHenry still hesitates; I will, however, prevail on him to do his duty if I can. In the mean time, permit me to say to you with confidence, that the affair which has caused so much doubt, delay, and perplexity, ought not, in justice, to be attributed entirely to the President. I will admit that he has been, in my opinion, greatly *mistaken*. The affair was, however, unfortunately managed, and General Washington and the President have not been understood by each other.

The question of rank being settled, I sincerely hope that General Knox will decline service. His pecuniary affairs are, I believe, so embarrassed, that there is no prospect of his preserving his independence, and I much fear, that the fortune of modern speculators (some loss of character) awaits him.

As a friend to your fame and the public interest, I cannot omit to request, that no conversation will take place respecting the question of rank. Even your personal feelings will be much alleviated by such an explanation as I will give you when we have the fortune to meet.

In the next place let me request, that as little may be done as possible relative to the organization of the army before there can be a *deliberate consultation* upon the state of our affairs. Depend upon it, that the arrangements of the War Department are all defective, and that nothing will succeed without a thorough reform. Besides, do not countenance the plan for making appointments in the great sections of our country, on the recommendations of individual officers. Though you may feel confidence in your own judgment, yet it will be well to remember that the same power will be exercised by others who may not be equally well informed. If a few more mistakes are made, the service will be irretrievably ruined.

If I can do it without danger* I will call on you, as I go on to Connecticut at the close of this month, when I will explain, &c.

WASHINGTON TO ———

MOUNT VERNON, 15th October, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

The information contained in your letter of the 3d instant was highly grateful to me. Such communications are not only satisfactory to me, but are really useful; for while I hold myself in readiness to obey the call of my country, it is expedient that I should have more authentic information than newspaper inconsistencies, of the approaching or receding storm, that I may regulate my private concerns accordingly. So far then, as you can give this, with propriety, would be received with thankfulness; and if under the seal of confidence, will be locked up in my own breast. It is pleasing to hear, that we had so few ships in France when the Directory thereof were pleased to lay an embargo thereon. I wish, on many accounts, that General Pinckney was as safely landed in his own country as I hear Mr. Gerry is, after his *terrible fright.* I hope so soon as he is relieved from the panic with which he was struck, and which must have continued whilst he remained on the watery element, he will come forward in stronger language than his last letter to Mr. Talleyrand contains, and with such explanations as his own character requires, and his country has a right to demand. We have nothing new in this quarter; an excessive drought, which still prevails, has been hurtful to our crops, and presses sorely upon the winter grain and grass seeds which have been sown this autumn. Maryland, instead of acquiring strength in her federal representation, by the last election, has lost ground. What will be the result of the elections in this State (in March next) is more, I believe, than any one can foretell at present. No stone

* The prevalence of an epidemic fever.

is left unturned, that can affect the federal interest by the democrats.

With great esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, October 20, 1798,

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 22d August, with the inclosure that has been delivered as directed. On that subject things are here as we could desire. There will be precisely such a co-operation as we wish the moment we are ready. The Secretary of State will show you my communication on this subject. Though I have not a word from him respecting it, your outline corresponds with what has been suggested by me, and approved by this government. Fortunately some months past I obtained a fac simile of the latest map of the country. It has been now two months in the hands of an engraver, who has engaged to deliver the copies in January. This government has considerable information respecting the interior, as well as concerning the condition and dispositions of the inhabitants, though I apprehend it is not of a recent date. What we know is favorable; but if we are to be betrayed by France, the glorious opportunity will be lost. I am gratified on receiving your opinion of the good condition of our public affairs, but I do not feel confident that we are as safe as you appear to think we are. It is fraud, not force, that I fear. A Paris paper of the 8th instant, which is the latest that takes any notice of the United States, says: Les dernieres lettres de Bourdeaux assurent qu'il y est arrivé un courrier extraordinaire porteur d'ordres pour remettre l'embargo sur les navires Américaines. Voila donc la guerre inévitable avec ce peuple, du moins toutes nos correspondances coincident avec ce bruit.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 21st October, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

The last mail to Alexandria, brought me a letter from the President of the United States, in which I am informed, that he had signed and given the commissions to yourself, Generals Pinckney and Knox, the same date, in hopes that an amicable adjustment or acquiescence might take place among you. But if these hopes should be disappointed, and controversies should arise, they will of course be submitted to me, as Commander-in-Chief, and if, after all, any one should be so obstinate as to appeal to him from the judgment of the Commander-in-Chief, he was determined to confirm that judgment.

General Knox is fully acquainted with my sentiments on this subject; and I hope no fresh difficulties will arise with General Pinckney. Let me entreat you, therefore, to give, without any delay, your *full* aid to the Secretary of War.

At present I will only add, that I am always and affectionately yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, 24th October, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I subjoin for your information a letter of the 17th instant, which I received this morning from the President of the United States, in answer to mine of the 26th ult, by which he consents to authorize you to concert with me the plan of laying out the money in question to the best advantage, and to appoint you to superintend the execution of it.

Will it not be proper immediately to form an accurate sur-

vey of such parts of the shores and waters of the port, as from their situation or other circumstances it may be desirable to fortify? Col. Burr informs me that this has already been partially done by Mr. Coles; and I submit to your consideration, whether it would not be advisable to confer with them respecting, and perhaps obtain their aid in executing, the measures proper to be taken to perfect that necessary work.

That being done, I perceive the next object of inquiry will be, the manner in which the port is capable of being the most effectually fortified. The result, I think, should then be laid before the President, through the Secretary of War; and our future operations will necessarily depend greatly on what he may direct to be communicated to us on the subject. I wish all this may be done and ascertained before the next session of our legislature; that my communications to them may be full and early. The expenses incident to the orders which you may give for these purposes will, of course, be paid; for it gives me pleasure now to consider you as being perfectly authorized to superintend the fortifications contemplated by the act.

I purpose to be in town next month, and am with great esteem and regard, &c.

HAMILTON TO ADAMS.

New-York, October 29th, 1798.

Sir:

I shall with pleasure obey the command contained in your letter of the 17th instant, and shall accordingly inform the Governor that I am ready to proceed in the execution of the measure.

A. HAMILTON TO HAMILTON.

EDINBURGH, 29th Oct., 1798.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

I received a few days ago a letter from my brother Robert, overflowing with the warmest sensibility of the many important obligations for which he is indebted to both you and Mrs. Hamilton. Since you take a pleasure in conferring happiness, it will no doubt afford you satisfaction to learn the joy which your friendly reception and endeavor to effect my brother's appointment into the American navy has communicated to his family in this country. The result of your application for the first-lieutenancy of one of the new frigates was still uncertain when he wrote; but, without anticipating the event, I may truly assure you that the endeavor has impressed the most indelible gratitude on our minds, and that we view with sensations of no common kind the excellent portrait which ornaments our chimney-piece. By the way, father has been informed by an American gentleman who visited Edinburgh lately, that it is a striking though not a flattering likeness of the original. In addition to the pleasure I received from the fair prospect of a permanent provision for my brother, I was not a little pleased that it removed him from the mercantile line into one for which he is much better qualified. A perfect knowledge of seamanship, and the routine of the naval duty, he has acquired both from long and various experience, and from the natural bent of his disposition, which early pointed to the sea. To amass a fortune by traffic requires talents of a different kind. Without affecting to undervalue these talents, it may be granted that eminent success in the mercantile line frequently depends on artful schemes and devices, which certainly confer no claim to respect, however necessary to success; and with these poor Robert can boast but little acquaintance. In the navy I consider him as in his element. Courage, attention and naval skill constitute the excellence of a sea officer; and of these qualities (unless my partiality deceive me) he is eminently possessed. With these impressions, you will conceive of what im-

portance his admission into the American navy as first lieutenant appears to me. To a mind like yours the pleasure of doing good is, I am sensible, a sufficient impulse; yet, as my brother resides under your roof, I am willing to hope that the unaffected simplicity, candor and urbanity of his manner will in time produce a still more cogent motive in personal friendship. I hope you will forgive my talking in this manner of my own brother, yet I must add (even at the risk of having Mr. Shandy's oddities imputed to myself) that, excepting in the want of professional pedantry, Sterne's character of Uncle Toby seems to me more applicable to my brother than to any I have ever conversed with.

In reply to your account of my acquaintance, Mr. Thomas Law, I am almost tempted to exclaim in the words of a statesman, to whom a manuscript plan of the famous projector Law had been submitted for his consideration, Oh la! Oh la! I am seriously concerned, however, to learn the embarrassed state of his affairs; though what could induce a man of his fortune to embark in such extensive speculations is not easily imagined. Your letter affords us some hope, though but a distant one, of seeing some of our young cousins in this country; wherever they are they will be followed by our kindest wishes for their prosperity.

I do not pretend to transmit you information on political subjects, yet they occupy at present so considerable a portion of the thoughts and conversation of the world, that they are not easily avoided. I anticipate the pleasure our late glorious victories must have communicated to the true friends of the present American Constitution. The destruction nearly total of the Toulon and Brest squadron, the former destined for Egypt, and the latter for Ireland, must have given the death-wound to the French navy. The rebellion, too, which lately appeared so formidable in Ireland, utterly extinguished, and only revived occasionally in predatory attacks on the lives and properties of individuals, will enable the ministry to open the parliament with unusual eclat. The party of opposition has lately fallen into considerable discredit from their conduct at the trial of O'Connor, for whose principles they vouched in the most unqualified manner. Yet,

notwithstanding these high attestations, O'Connor proves to be a traitor, actually conspiring to introduce a foreign enemy into his native country, at the very time in which our patriots were so loud in his praises. If it be admitted that they were unacquainted with O'Connor's insidious designs, the vehemence of the protestations must show how open they are to deception, and argues little in favor of their understandings. Whether Buonaparte has reached his ultimate destination, or intends to prosecute his expedition to India, must soon appear; as the change of monsoon, which happens in the month of September, will prevent his traversing the Indian Ocean, unless he has previously effected his passage. There are no authentic accounts of his having left Cairo. I beg to offer my best compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, and that you will ever believe me, my dear cousin,

Faithfully yours,

A. HAMILTON.

PINCKNEY TO M'HENRY.

TRENTON, October 31, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

Agreeably to your desire expressed in your favor of yesterday, I shall endeavor to be with you either at this place or Philadelphia, on the tenth of next month. I am sorry that General Knox has declined his appointment. A few hours after the ship in which I came, had cast anchor in the North River, it was intimated to me, that it had been doubted whether I would accept my appointment, as General Hamilton, who was of inferior rank to me in the last war, was ranked before me in the new arrangement. I declared then, and still declare, it was with the greatest pleasure I saw his name at the head of the list of the major-generals, and applauded the discrimination which had placed him there. I knew that his talents in war were great; that he had a genius capable of forming an extensive military plan, and a spirit courageous and enterprising equal to the execution of it I therefore, without any hesitation, immediately sent him word by Major Rutledge, that I rejoiced at his appointment, and would with pleasure serve under him.

It was not until about ten days ago, that I was informed by my friend, Major Haskell, that General Knox was dissatisfied, that General Hamilton and myself were placed before him. As I considered General Knox to be a very valuable

officer, though I do not estimate his talents in a degree equal to those of General Hamilton, I told the Major that rather than the feelings of General Knox should be hurt, at my being ranked before him, he might take my place in the arrangement; and I desired him, when he wrote to the General, to intimate this to him. General Knox's *absolute refusal* to serve, because I am placed before him, would make the same offer from me now, improper. I do not, therefore, renew it. But if the authority which appointed me to the rank of second major-general in the army, will review the arrangement, and place General Knox before me, I will neither quit the service, nor be dissatisfied.

I have the honor to be with great respect and regard,

Your most obedient humble servant,

CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY.

M'HENRY TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 18th December, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received this moment your two letters of the 16th and 17th instant, and have read them over cursorily, though not without fully understanding them.

I intend that the recruiting service be wholly confided to you, and shall send you the printed instructions and a copy of the English system on which they are founded. It cannot, however, be entered upon immediately, or until our clothing is in more forwardness.

It is certain that you must have been a loser in the way you mention, by accepting the office you now hold, and as certain that justice requires that none of the pay or emoluments annexed to it should be refused. I shall, as early as possible, obtain a proper decision.

I am preparing a report to the President, who has seen the two letters and all other papers and letters communicated to me by General Washington. I shall add some matters to the subjects for congressional provisions which they embrace, when it will be transferred to Congress by message.

The idea of two companies of hussars is judicious.

Yours affectionately.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, NOV. 9, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

The same uncertainty continues respecting the recommencement of the war. Both Austria and Prussia are bolder than before the late naval success of this country; but the conduct of the Emperor is rather calculated to show that he may be purchased by further acquisitions in Italy. Naples will not decline a war. Her existence perhaps depends upon her provoking it.

The casus fœderis with Austria is a defensive war; but the Emperor has said he should not be critical on that head. The news of the capitulation of Buonaparte, and the destruction of the transports at Alexandria, is not confirmed, though they are events which must take place. The expeditions against Ireland are annihilated. Of the nine ships that sailed from Brest, seven, including the Hoche, are in the English ports; the two frigates that escaped from the Texel have both been taken; and of three that sailed from Rochefort, and appeared off Ireland soon after the defeat of the Brest squadron, two are said to be taken.

The Dutch frigates were probably bound to Demerara, though the soldiers were told they were to go to Ireland.

Parliament meets on the 20th. Mr. Pitt will have a good account to give of the extension of their commerce, and of the increase of the revenue. The assessed taxes, which have been shamefully evaded, will be given up, and a tax upon the income of the nation substituted. There will be great difficulties in the details, as well as strong prejudices to overcome, but I hear that the body of merchants in London are to support the plan. The late naval success has excited a high degree of animation throughout the nation; and the government will be generally and cordially supported in such measures as it shall adopt to prosecute the war. The funds have got up to 57 per cent., which is a great rise, and in a short time. You will see that I have prevented the sending to you of about fifty Irish state prisoners, who were at the head of the rebellion in Ireland, and

closely connected with the Directory at Paris. Probably our patriots will think my conduct presumptuous. In the present posture of our affairs, I could have no hesitation! We have an account that the Constellation, Capt. Truxton, has taken a French frigate on our coast. This news is brought by Capt. Cochrane, of the Thetis, who will not be permitted to return to the American station.

Yours very truly, &c.

P. S. The Hamburgh mail, just arrived, informs us that very great resistance is made to the requisition of 200,000 men in Belgium; 12,000 young men are embodied, and the spirit of revolt extends itself every where. The scene is too near the army of the Rhine.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, Dec. 19th, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

The same uncertainty continues to perplex us concerning the recommencement of the war. One day we are told that Naples has really begun, and that Austria is on the way to support her; the next, that Naples is kept back by Austria, to whom the Directory have made the most advantageous offers. It is certain that France feels the change that has, within the last six months, taken place in Europe, and is extremely anxious to defeat the projected coalition. Prussia observes, and seems inclined to adhere to the same cautious policy that for some time has governed her administration. Poor Spain is completely under the influence of the Directory, and, however strange it may seem, the king, who most cordially hates England, shed tears, and was inconsolable on the news of Nelson's victory. Portugal is threatened with a war with Spain, unless she concludes a peace on the terms of the Directory. There is great discontent in many of the French departments, but still the levy of the new

requisition proceeds. The insurrection of Brabant extends itself; but though it will give the Directory some trouble, cannot prove successful unless the war soon recommences. Mr. Grenville, an elder brother of the minister, has gone on a special mission to Berlin. He is said to be very clever, and has heretofore refused to go into the diplomatic course. Unless favorable circumstances of success exist, one would scarcely believe that the minister would just now have employed his brother. The French will lose all their islands, trade, and influence in the Mediterranean. Minorca has been taken by the English. Malta must fall. Corsica will probably expel the French, though England will not again accept of their capricious allegiance. Zante, Cerego, and Cephalonia, and probably Corfu, have fallen into the hands of the Turks and Russians.

A report from Constantinople states that Buonaparte has been assassinated; though probable, it wants confirmation. Mr. Pitt will be supported in the tax of 10 per cent. on the income of the nation; indeed, the people appear firm and resolved to support the government, and the prosperity of their manufactures and trade enable them to do so. Adieu.

Yours truly, &c.

P. S. I make you my hearty congratulations on the settlement of the question of rank.

OTIS TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 21, 1798.

SIR:

I was very solicitous while you were in the city for the indulgence of an interview with you, that would have enabled me to learn your opinion in relation to such defensive measures as ought now to be adopted by Congress; and I called upon you once with that view; but being then disappointed, and perceiving

afterwards the pressing nature of your immediate avocations, I chose rather to forego the advantage of your sentiments, than invade the little leisure you appeared able to command. Being since appointed chairman of a committee to consider the policy of extending our internal means of defence, the great confidence which I feel in the correctness of your political opinions, and your permission on a former occasion to avail myself of them, induce me to request that I may be honored with your general ideas upon this subject, if you can without inconvenience devote an hour to my instruction. In particular, is it advisable to augment the present permanent army under all circumstances? If not, would it be eligible to reduce the number of men in each regiment, with a view to economy, and to an application of the money saved to the extension of the naval armament? or are there any prominent defects in the military establishments which demand a reform?

Will there be any utility in reviving the section of the act which establishes the provisional army, or the act for providing for the draft of 80,000 militia?

Does good policy require very liberal grants of money for fortifications?

Is it expedient to continue the act prohibiting intercourse with France and her acknowledged dominions? If so, as the act now stands, may commerce be carried on between the United States and any part of the French dominions that shall withdraw from its allegiance to the parent country? or, if this be doubtful, would it be politic to grant an express commission to the President to open the trade with any part of the French dominions, when, in his opinion, the public good would admit or require it?

Shall the President be authorized to attack, capture, and hold all or any of the French West India islands as an indemnity for the spoliations committed on our trade?

If on this, or any other subjects, you see fit to gratify me with your opinions, they will be cherished and respected by me without a disclosure of the source from which they are derived; and if, on the other hand, you think this liberty is not warranted by the duration or intimacy of my personal acquaintance, you

will, I hope, excuse and impute it to an habitual and profound respect for your character and talents.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

H. G. Otis.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

Philadelphia, December 21st, 1798.

Dear Sir:

I have received your favor of the 20th, with twenty dollars; the sum I lent you was thirty dollars; yesterday I sent you a small bill which you forgot to pay. No consul can be received at present.

The result of all the inquiries which I have been able to make is, that a small sum might be raised by the gradual sale of 7$\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. stock at par, but that there can be no certainty, that a loan would immediately be filled for the sum we want under 8 per cent.

If among your acquaintances you discover any circumstances to alter this opinion, be pleased to inform me *soon*.

HAMILTON TO OTIS.

New-York, December 27th, 1798.

Dear Sir:

I did not receive till yesterday your letter dated 21st inst. No apology was necessary for so gratifying a remark of your good opinion, upon which I set the high value it so justly deserves.

In the inclosed extract of a letter to another of the government, you will find my ideas generally on the subject of your letter. I adopt this method of communication as equally effec-

tual and best adapted to the multiplicity of my avocations. Some additional remarks in direct reference to your particular questions, may perhaps be requisite to fulfil your object.

Any reduction of the actual force appears to me inexpedient. It will argue to our enemy that we are either very narrow in our resources, or that our jealousy of his designs are abated. Besides, that with a view to the possibility of internal disorders alone, the force authorized is not too considerable. The efficacy of militia for suppressing such disorders is not too much to be relied upon. The experience of the western expedition ought not to be forgotten. That was a very uphill business. There were more than once appearances to excite alarm as to the perseverance of the troops, and it is not easy to foresee what might have been the result had there been serious resistance. The repetition of similar exertions may be found very difficult, insomuch as to render it extremely needful, in these precarious times, to have the government armed with the whole of the force which has been voted.

There are several defects in the military establishment which demand reform as well for economy as efficiency. On these there has been an ample communication from the Commander-in-Chief to the Department of War. I cannot conceive why nothing has yet gone to progress. Certainly this cannot be much longer delayed. Will it be amiss informally to interrogate the minister? If the silence is persisted in, you shall know from me the objects.

The extract answers your question as to the provisional army. I think the act respecting the eighty thousand militia ought likewise to be revived. The effect abroad will be good, and it will likewise be so at home, as the evidence of a reliance of the government on the militia.

Good policy does not appear to me to require extensive appropriations for fortifications at the *present juncture*. Money can be more usefully employed in other ways. A good deal of previous examination ought to lead to a plan for fortifying three or four cardinal points. More than this will be a misapplication of money. Secure positions for arsenals and dock-yards are in this view a primary object.

Your last question respecting the West India Islands, I shall reserve for a future communication.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

New-York, December 28th, 1798.

Dear Sir:

I have embraced every opportunity since the receipt of yours of the 21st to obtain light on the subject of the loan; but my research has been essentially fruitless. Opinions are as various as they are vague. You must therefore conjecture, and you ought to act on the sure side for selling the loan.

For my part, I retain the opinion that the loan ought to be upon eight per cent interest, the capital to be fixed for ten years, and then to become redeemable at pleasure, one per cent to be appropriated cotemporarily as a purchasing fund for sinking the principal, and the loan to be open for competition for the entire or any less sum; time enough to let in European bidders.

The true principle is to get as good terms as possible for the United States, exclusive of local considerations, which can only have a temporary and illusory operation. The stock will find its way to its proper market, wherever it may be first sold.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

1798.

Dear Sir:

I have been reading the report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the subject of direct taxes. I think it does him credit. The general principles and objects are certainly good, nor am I sure that any thing better can be done.

I remember, however, that I once promised you to put in

writing my ideas on the subject. I intended to have done it, and communicated them to the Secretary. My hurry and press of business prevented me; but I concluded lately to devote an evening to a rude sketch, and to send it to you. You may show it to the Secretary, and confer. If, in the course of the thing, it can be applied to the general end we all have in view, it will give me pleasure; if not, there will have been but little time misspent. Of course, no use will be made of it in contradiction to the views of the Treasury Department.

As to the part which relates to land, I do not feel any strong preference of my plan to that in the report; for this, in my opinion, ought to be considered only as an auxiliary, and not as the *pith* of the tax. But I own, I have a strong preference of my plan of a house-tax to that in the report. These are my reasons.

It is more comprehensive, embracing all houses, and will be proportionably more productive. It is more certain, avoiding the evasions and partialities to which valuations will be for ever liable, and I think it for that reason likely to be at least as equal. I entertain no doubt that the rule of rates, adapted as they are to characteristic circumstances, will in fact be more favorable to equality than appraisements. I think the idea of taxing only houses of above a certain annual value will be dissatisfactory. The comparison of the proprietors of houses immediately above with those immediately below the line will beget discontent, and the errors of valuations will increase it.

I think there will be a great advantage in throwing the weight of the tax *on houses*, as well because lands are more difficult to manage as because it will fall in a manner less dissatisfactory.

My plan as to houses can be easily combined with that in the report as to land.

Some years ago I proposed a similar plan in the legislature of this State. It went through three readings and had a great majority in its favor, but as it was essentially different from what had always before obtained in the State it was thought best to postpone, to feel the sense of constituents.—I left the legislature—changes in our political situation rendered the plan of State taxation less important, and the business shrunk out of

sight. But there was every appearance that the plan would have been popular in this State.

You observe I confine myself to a million. I would not bear hard in this way. I would add, as aid, the taxes contemplated last session—on stamps, collateral successions, new modifications of some articles of imports, and let me add, saddle-horses. The idea of taxing slaves generally will not work well. If confined to all menial servants for luxury, as coachmen, footmen, cooks, &c., it would be eligible.

HAMILTON TO DAYTON.

1799.

An accurate view of the internal situation of the United States presents many discouraging reflections to the enlightened friends of our government and country. Notwithstanding the unexampled success of our public measures at home and abroad, —notwithstanding the instructive comments afforded by the disastrous and disgusting scenes of the French Revolution—public opinion has not been ameliorated; sentiments dangerous to social happiness have not been diminished: on the contrary, there are symptoms which warrant the apprehension that among the most numerous class of citizens, errors of a very pernicious tendency have not only preserved but have extended their empire. Though something may have been gained on the side of men of information and property, more has probably been lost on that of persons of a different description. An extraordinary exertion of the friends of government, aided by circumstances of momentary impression, gave, in the last election for members of Congress, a more favorable countenance to some States than they had before worn; yet it is the belief of well-informed men, that no real or desirable change has been wrought in those States. On the other hand, it is admitted by close observers, that some of the parts of the Union which, in time past, have been the soundest, have of late exhibited signs of a gangrene begun and progressive.

It is likewise apparent that opposition to the government has acquired more system than formerly, is bolder in the avowal of its designs, less solicitous than it was to discriminate between the Constitution and the administration, and more open and more enterprising in its projects. The late attempt of Virginia and Kentucky to unite the State legislatures in a direct resistance to certain laws of the Union, can be considered in no other light than as an attempt to change the government.

It is stated, in addition, that the opposition party in Virginia, the head-quarters of the faction, have followed up the hostile declarations which are to be found in the resolutions of their General Assembly by an actual preparation of the means of supporting them by force; that they have taken measures to put their militia on a more efficient footing—are preparing considerable arsenals and magazines, and (which is an unequivocal proof how much they are in earnest) have gone so far as to lay new taxes on their citizens. Amidst such serious indications of hostility, the safety and the duty of the supporters of the government call upon them to adopt vigorous measures of counteraction. It will be wise in them to act upon the hypothesis, that the opposers of the government are resolved, if it shall be practicable, to make its existence a question of force. Possessing as they now do all the constitutional powers, it will be an unpardonable mistake on their part if they do not exert them to surround the Constitution with more ramparts, and to disconcert the schemes of its enemies.

The measures proper to be adopted may be classed under heads.

First.—Establishments which will extend the influence and promote the popularity of the Government. Under this head three important expedients occur. *First.* The extension of the Judiciary system. *Second.* The improvement of the great communications, as well interiorly as coastwise by turnpike roads. *Third.* The institution of a society with funds to be employed in premiums for new inventions, discoveries and improvements in agriculture and in the arts.

The extension of the Judiciary system ought to embrace two

objects:—one, the subdivision of each State into small districts (suppose Connecticut into four, and so on in proportion), assigning to each a judge with a moderate salary—the other, the appointment in each county of conservators or justices of the peace, with only ministerial functions, and with no other compensation than fees for the services they shall perform. This measure is necessary to give efficacy to the laws, the execution of which is obstructed by the want of similar organs and by the indisposition of the local magistrates in some States. The Constitution requires that judges shall have fixed salaries; but this does not apply to mere justices of the peace without judicial powers. Both those descriptions of persons are essential, as well to the energetic execution of the laws as to the purposes of salutary patronage.

The thing no doubt would be a subject of clamor, but it would carry with it its own antidote, and when once established, would bring a very powerful support to the government.

The improvement of the roads would be a measure universally popular. None can be more so. For this purpose a regular plan should be adopted coextensive with the Union, to be successively executed, and a fund should be appropriated sufficient for the basis of a loan of a million of dollars. The revenue of the post-office naturally offers itself. The future revenue from tolls would more than reimburse the expense, and public utility would be promoted in every direction. The institution of a society, with the aid of proper funds, to encourage agriculture and the arts, besides being productive of general advantage, will speak powerfully to the feelings and interests of those classes of men to whom the benefits derived from the government have been heretofore the least manifest.

Second: Provision for augmenting the means and consolidating the strength of the government. A million of dollars may without difficulty be added to the revenue, by increasing the rates of some existing indirect taxes, and by the addition of some new items of a similar character.

The direct taxes ought neither to be increased nor diminished. Our naval force ought to be completed to six ships of the line,

twelve frigates, and twenty-four sloops of war. More at this juncture would be disproportioned to our resources; less would be inadequate to the ends to be accomplished. Our military force should, for the present, be kept upon its actual footing; making provision for a re-enlistment of the men for five years in the event of a settlement of differences with France,—with this condition, that in case of peace between Great Britain, France, and Spain, the United States being then also at peace, all the privates of the twelve additional regiments of infantry, and of the regiment of dragoons, not exceeding twenty to a company, shall be disbanded. The corps of artillerists may be left to retain the numbers which it shall happen to have, but without being recruited until the number of officers and privates shall fall below the standard of the infantry and dragoons. A power ought to be given to the President to augment the four old regiments to their war establishment.

The laws respecting volunteer companies, and the *eventual army*, should be rendered permanent, and the executive should proceed without delay to organize the latter. Some modifications of the discretion of the President will however be proper in a permanent law. And it will be a great improvement of the plan, if it shall be thought expedient to allow the enlistment, for the purpose of instruction, of a corps of sergeants equal to the number requisite for the eventual army. The institution of a Military Academy will be an auxiliary of great importance. Manufactories of every article, the woollen parts of clothing included, which are essential to the supply of the army, ought to be established.

Third: Arrangements for confirming and enlarging the legal powers of the government. There are several temporary laws which, in this view, ought to be rendered permanent, particularly that which authorizes the calling out of the militia to suppress unlawful combinations and insurrections.

An article ought to be proposed to be added to the Constitution, for empowering Congress to open canals in all cases in which it may be necessary to conduct them through the territory of two or more States, or through the territory of a State and

that of the United States. The power is very desirable for the purpose of improving the prodigious facilities for inland navigation with which nature has favored this country. It will also assist commerce and agriculture, by rendering the transportation of commodities more cheap and expeditious. It will tend to secure the connection, by facilitating the communication between distant portions of the Union, and it will be a useful source of influence to the government. Happy would it be, if a clause could be added to the Constitution, enabling Congress, on the application of any considerable portion of a State, containing not less than a hundred thousand persons, to erect it into a separate State, on the condition of fixing the quota of contributions which it shall make towards antecedent debts, if any there shall be, reserving to Congress the authority to levy within such State the taxes necessary to the payment of such quota, in case of neglect on the part of the State. *The subdivision of the great States is indispensable to the security of the general government, and with it of the Union.*

Great States will always feel a rivalship with the common head, will often be supposed to machinate against it, and in certain situations will be able to do it with decisive effect. The subdivision of such States ought to be a cardinal point in the federal policy; and small States are doubtless best adapted to the purposes of local regulation and to the preservation of the republican spirit. This suggestion, however, is merely thrown out for consideration. It is feared that it would be inexpedient and even dangerous to propose, *at this time*, an amendment of the kind.

Fourth: Laws for restraining and punishing incendiary and seditious practices. It will be useful to declare that all such writings, &c., which at common law are libels, if levelled against any officer whatsoever of the United States, shall be cognizable in the courts of the United States. To preserve confidence in the officers of the general government, by preserving their reputations from malicious and unfounded slanders, is essential, to enable them to fulfil the ends of their appointment. It is therefore both constitutional and politic to place their reputations under the guardianship of the courts of the United States. They ought not to be left to the cold and reluctant protection of State courts, always tempo-

rizing and sometimes disaffected. But what avail laws which are not executed? Renegade aliens conduct more than one of the most incendiary presses in the United States—and yet, in open contempt and defiance of the laws, they are permitted to continue their destructive labors. Why are they not sent away? Are laws of this kind passed merely to excite odium and remain a dead letter? Vigor in the executive is at least as necessary as in the legislative branch; if the President requires to be stimulated those who can approach him ought to do it.

HAMILTON TO LA FAYETTE.

NEW-YORK, January 6th, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I have been made happy, my dear friend, by the receipt of your letter of the 12th of August last. No explanation of your political principles was necessary to satisfy me of the perfect consistency and purity of your conduct. The interpretation may always be left to my attachment for you. Whatever difference of opinion may on any occasion exist between us, can never lessen my conviction of the goodness both of your head and heart. I expect from you a return of this sentiment so far as concerns the heart. 'Tis needless to detail to you my political tenets. I shall only say that I hold with *Montesquieu*, that a government must be fitted to a nation, as much as a coat to the individual; and, consequently, that what may be good at Philadelphia, may be bad at Paris, and ridiculous at Petersburgh.

I join with you in regretting the misunderstanding between our two countries. You will have seen by the President's speech that a door is again opened for terminating them amicably. And you may be assured that we are sincere, and that it is in the power of France, by reparation to our merchants for past injury, and the stipulation of justice in future, to put an end to the controversy.

But I do not much like the idea of your being any way im-

plicated in the affair, lest you should be compromitted in the opinion of one or the other of the parties. It is my opinion that it is best for you to stand aloof. Neither have I abandoned the idea that it is most advisable for you to remain in Europe till the difference is adjusted. It would be very difficult for you here to steer a course which would not place you in a party, and not remove you from the broad ground which you now occupy in the hearts of all. It is a favorite point with me that you shall find in the universal regard of this country all the consolations which the loss of your own (for so I consider it) may render requisite.

Mrs. Church and Mrs. Hamilton unite in assurance of their affectionate remembrance.

Believe me always

Your very cordial and faithful friend,

A. H.

MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, January 21st, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

We have the New-York papers to the 15th ult. These contain the speeches as well as the answers of the two Houses. All seems intended for the best, but it gives me an ill idea abroad of our zeal, to find that our army decreed so many months since remained to be raised. The difficulty and time necessary to find suitable officers, reminds one of the like impediments which preceded the appointment of Monroe to Paris. I hope the results will differ.

I am entirely disposed, indeed resolved, to treat the subject as the good principles of all concerned merit, but I can't conceal from you my very great apprehension that too much is left to the chance and influence of intrigue and diplomatic skill. In the light in which I alone can see the views of France, there seems to be no secure alternative, and the sooner we so say and act, the less will be our danger.

For God's sake attend to the very interesting subject treated of in my ciphered dispatches to the Secretary of State of the 10th, 18th, and 19th, instant. Connect it as it should be, with the main object, the time to accomplish which has arrived. Without superstition, Providence seems to have prepared the way, and to have pointed out the instruments of its will. Our children will reproach us if we neglect our duty, and humanity will escape many scourges if we act with wisdom and decision. I am more confirmed than before, that an efficient force will be confederated to act against France. The combination is *not yet completed*, but, as I have reason to believe, will soon be.

That will be the moment for us to settle upon immutable foundations the extensive system of the American nation. Who can hinder us? One nation alone has the power; and she will co-operate in the accomplishment in South America of what has so well been done in North.

P. S.—Mr. Church knows very well Col. Maitland.

HAMILTON TO H. G. OTIS.

New-York, January 26th, 1799.

Dear Sir:

You will recollect that I reserved for a future answer part of a letter which I had the pleasure of receiving from you some time since. These are my ideas on that subject.

I should be glad to see, before the close of the session, a law empowering the President, at his discretion, in case a negotiation between the United States and France should not be on foot by the first of August next, or being on foot should terminate without an adjustment of differences, to declare that a state of war exists between the two countries, and thereupon to employ the land and naval forces of the United States in such manner as

shall appear to him most effectual for annoying the enemy, and for preventing and frustrating hostile designs of France, either directly or *indirectly through any of her allies.*

This course of proceeding, by postponing the event, and giving time for the intervention of negotiation, would be a further proof of moderation in the government, and would tend to reconcile our citizens to the last extremity, if it shall ensue, gradually accustoming their minds to look forward to it.

If France be really desirous of accommodation, this plan will accelerate her measures to bring it about. If she have not that desire, it is best to anticipate her final vengeance, and to throw whatever weight we have into the scale opposed to her. This conduct may contribute to disable her to do the mischief which she may meditate.

As it is every moment possible that the project of taking possession of the Floridas and Louisiana long since attributed to France, may be attempted to be put in execution, it is very important that the Executive should be clothed with power to meet and defeat so dangerous an enterprise. Indeed, if it is the policy of France to leave us in a state of semi-hostility, 'tis preferable to terminate it, and by taking possession of those countries for ourselves, to obviate the mischief of their falling into the hands of an active foreign power, and at the same time to secure to the United States the advantage of keeping the key of the western country. I have been long in the habit of considering the acquisition of those countries as essential to the permanency of the Union, which I consider as very important to the welfare of the whole.

If universal empire is still to be the pursuit of France, what can tend to defeat the purpose better than to detach South America from Spain, which is only the channel through which the riches of *Mexico and Peru* are conveyed to France? The executive ought to be put in a situation to embrace favorable conjunctures for effecting that separation. 'Tis to be regretted that the preparation of an adequate military force does not advance more rapidly. There is some sad nonsense on this subject in some good heads. The reveries of some of the friends of the govern-

ment are more injurious to it than the attacks of its declared enemies.

When will men learn to profit by experience?

SEDGWICK TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, February 7th, 1799.

I had the pleasure, my dear sir, the day before yesterday, to receive your favor of the 2d.

With regard to the conduct of Virginia and Kentucky, the moment I came into town, I applied to the apparent leaders in the House of Representatives, and stated to them my opinion of the measures which to me seemed expedient to be adopted. That it was necessary to preoccupy the ground; that for this purpose, it would be expedient to appoint an able committee, to refer the addresses on the subject with an intention of making a report, which should have all the properties of an address. I had two reasons for preferring this being done by the House, because we had before the Senate no address on the subject, and because, for obvious reasons, the conduct of the House would excite more attention, and make a deeper impression. I spoke to no gentleman who did not explicitly concur with me in opinion, but nothing has been done, because, as I understand the gentlemen cannot agree on the precise mode in which it is to be done. They still say, and I have this day had conversation with them on the subject, that the business will yet be done. Had it not been believed that the House would have before this time executed this important object, it would have long since been in progress in the Senate. It is not yet, perhaps, too late, though I regret as much as any one the delay.

You have seen, I presume, the address of the minority of the House of Representatives of Virginia to their constituents. It is said to have been drawn by Marshall. It is able, and elegant, and eloquent; but the eloquence is of a kind not to make a

deep impression on the gross materials to which it is addressed. It shows that its author believes their situation critical, and the danger imminent. It was, perhaps, incompatible with the relation of the addressers, as a minority, to employ the instrument of denunciation, and yet I am persuaded, no procedure of this kind can be effectual without it.

Under the present circumstances, is it expedient that this subject should be undertaken by the Senate?

The delays in the military department are as unaccountable as they are injurious. Immediately after receiving your letter, I called on the Secretary at War; he told me that the delay had originated principally from a disappointment in obtaining clothing,—that the contracts had failed. I replied that if such was the case, that by an immediate employment of all the tailors in the great towns, clothes might be procured faster than they would be wanted by the recruits; that this was the season to enlist; that it would soon be passed; and that if this opportunity was neglected, no one could foresee the evil consequences which might result. It would give encouragement to all those who had already erected the standard of opposition. It would dishearten the friends of the government, and render the government itself unpopular.

He said that the business of enlistment would be put under your immediate direction; that the orders for that purpose were in forwardness, and would that day be completed, and submitted to the President for his approbation; and that the next day they would be forwarded to you by the mail. Before this time, therefore, you have them; but if they are not impracticable, I shall be agreeably disappointed. Is there no remedy for this evil? Will it be possible to get on in a state of war or insurrection?

I need not say I write to you in the most perfect confidence. I last evening called to pay my respects to the President. He was alone, and, as I hoped, soon introduced the subject of our military. I gave him my view of the subject, and somewhat at large. He replied, and nearly in the following words:—"As to the Virginians, sir, it is weakness to apprehend any thing from them; but, if you must have an army, I will give it to you; but,

remember, it will make the government more unpopular than all their other acts. They have submitted with more patience than any people ever did to the burden of taxes, which has been *liberally laid on*, but their patience will not last always." This was the text on which he dilated extensively. I cannot say that I was astonished. Astonishment is a sentiment which he has for some time lost the power to excite.

During the time that I was with him, the bill before the Senate for the organization of the army was mentioned. He asked me what additional authority it was proposed to give the commander-in-chief? I answered none; that all that was proposed was to give him a new title—that of general. "What," said he, "are you going to appoint him general over the President? I have not been so blind but I have seen a combined effort among those who call themselves the friends of government, to annihilate the essential powers given to the President. This, sir, (raising his voice,) my understanding has perceived, and my heart felt." After an expression of surprise, and a declaration of belief that he was mistaken, with *all humility* I prayed him to mention the facts from which he had made this inference. He answered, that if I had not seen *it*, it was improper for him to go into the detail.

This shows that we are afflicted with an evil for which certainly no complete remedy can be applied; but it might be palliated, perhaps, by bringing into the administration a man of talents, and of that peculiar kind which gives an ascendency without its being perceived. This never was in any country more important. Nor if the right character could be found, is it an object unattainable? With all his good qualities, however, our friend C——n is not the man. In official details and execution, he has perhaps no superior; but in the other, and more essential characteristic, to my mind, he is wholly deficient. But can a vacancy be made? While I have been continuing writing, amidst the chit-chat of senatorial debate, the mail is closed. Will you permit me to close this without revision? I have written I know not what, but I hope it is intelligible. This I do know, that I am

Yours sincerely, &c.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 9, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I am this moment favored with your letter of the 9th instant. I shall immediately reflect on the most important point, and to-morrow give you the result.

The provision in the law is ample. But in this, my dear sir, as in every thing else, we must unite caution with decision. The United States must not be committed on the independence of St. Domingo. No guaranty—no formal treaty—nothing that can rise up in judgment. It will be enough to let Touissant be assured verbally, but explicitly, that upon his declaration of independence a commercial intercourse will be opened, and continue while he maintains it, and gives due protection to our vessels and property. I incline to think the declaration of independence ought to precede.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

(PRIVATE.)

NEW-YORK, February 16, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

Different reasons have conspired to prevent my writing to you since my return to New-York—the multiplicity of my avocations, an imperfect state of health, and the want of something material to communicate.

The official letter herewith transmitted, will inform you of the disposition of our military affairs which has been recently adopted by the department of war. There shall be no want of exertion on my part to promote the branches of the service confided to my care.

But I more and more discover cause to apprehend that obsta-

cles of a very peculiar kind stand in the way of an efficient and successful management of our military concerns. These it would be unsafe at present to explain.

It may be useful that I should be able to write to you hereafter some confidential matters relating to our administration without the mention of names—when this happens, I shall designate the President as X, the Secretary of State by V, of the Treasury by I, and of the Department of War by C.

Every thing in the northern quarter, as far as I can learn, continues favorable to the Government.

Very affectionately and truly, I remain, &c.

SEDGWICK TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, February 19, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR:

The President, yesterday, sent the Senate a nomination of Mr. Murray to be appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the French Republic; accompanied by a letter from Talleyrand to the Secretary of the French legation at Amsterdam. By this letter it appears that for some time communications have been made to Mr. Murray of the friendly dispositions of the French government towards this country, and it contains assurances that any minister from America will be received and treated with the respect due to the representative of a *great, powerful, and independent nation.* I have neither time nor inclination to detail all the false and insidious declarations it contains. This measure, important and mischievous as it is, was the result of Presidential wisdom, without the knowledge of, or any intimation to any one of the administration. Had the foulest heart and the ablest head in the world have been permitted to select the most embarrassing and ruinous measure, perhaps it would have been precisely the one which has been adopted. In the dilemma to which we are reduced, whether we approve or reject the nomination, evils

only, certain, great, but in extent incalculable, present themselves. This would be true was Mr. Murray the ablest negotiator in Christendom; but with all his virtues, he is feeble, unguarded, credulous, and unimpressive. I have not yet decided ultimately what I shall do. At present the nomination must be postponed. I am much obliged to you for the copy you sent me of the Report. It is excellent. I have made the best use of it in my power.

I am, with sincerity, your friend.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

New-York, February 21, 1799.

The step announced in your letter just received, in all its circumstances, would astonish, if any thing from that quarter could astonish.

But as it has happened, my present impression is, that the measure must go into effect with the additional idea of a Commission of Three.

The mode must be accommodated with the President. *Murray* is certainly not strong enough for so immensely important a mission.

Yours truly,

A. H.

I will write to-morrow if my impression varies.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, February 20, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

Since I wrote you on the 9th, (which you acknowledge in a short letter, promising further communications,) Dr. Stevens has been appointed Consul-General of St. Domingo, and will probably embark before the close of next week. If you have written further to me in answer to my letter of the 9th, the letter has miscarried, for I have received nothing. I must frame Dr. Stevens's instructions in a few days, and wish to furnish him with ideas on the point I stated. This cannot be done *officially*, but he will know how to use it.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

(CONFIDENTIAL.)

PHILADELPHIA, February 25th, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR:

This morning I have received your favor of the 21st. We have all been shocked and grieved at the nomination of a minister to negotiate with France. There is but one sentiment on the subject among the friends of their country and the real supporters of the President's administration. Pains have been taken to ameliorate the measure by throwing it into a commission. But the President is fixed. The Senate must *approve* or negative the nomination. In the latter event, perhaps he will name commissioners. I beg you to be assured, that it is wholly *his own act*, without any participation or communication with any of us. It is utterly inconsistent with his late nominations of Mr. King to negotiate a commercial treaty with Russia, and of Mr. Smith to negotiate a like treaty with the Porte. Both these objects will now be defeated. It was by the *proffered* aid of Russia and Great

Britain, that we were induced to propose to negotiate with the Porte. With respect to St. Domingo, the President will certainly do no act to encourage Touissaint to declare the island independent; but he will doubtless open the commercial intercourse, when Dr. Stevens (Consul-General) shall certify that privateering is at an end; so that, agreeably to the 4th section of the act, the President may consider it safe and for the interest of the United States to do it.

The foundation of this fatal nomination of Mr. Murray was laid in the President's speech at the opening of Congress. He peremptorily determined (against our unanimous opinions) to leave open the door for the degrading and mischievous measure of sending another minister to France, even without waiting for *direct* overtures from her.

SEDGWICK TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, February 25th, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

The committee to whom was referred the President's message nominating Mr. Murray, had a free conversation with him on Saturday evening, under the protestation that it should not be mentioned in the report, nor considered as a precedent. During the conversation he declared repeatedly, that to defend the executive against oligarchic influence, it was indispensable that he should insist on a decision on the nomination; and he added: "I have, on mature reflection, made up my mind, and I will neither withdraw nor modify the nomination." He was, however, pleased to let us know, that if Murray was negatived, he would then propose a commission, two of the members of which should be gentlemen within the United States; that the commission should be joint; but that by instructions, any two should be authorized to act, and that in no case should the gentlemen be permitted to leave the country until the positive assurances men-

tioned in his message of the 21st June shall have been given. In consequence of these declarations, at a meeting of the federal members, it was agreed to reject the nomination. I had already framed a report, and was ready to make it, when I was privately informed that he wished I would postpone the report, as he was preparing a message on the subject.

That is this moment delivered—is on the principles he had mentioned, and the persons named are the Chief Justice, Patrick Henry, and Mr. Murray. This is every thing which, under the circumstances, could be done. I have written the above during debate; I hope it is intelligible.

General Hamilton.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

Mount Vernon, Feb. 25, 1799.

My Dear Sir:

Your private letter of the 16th inst., came duly to hand, and safe; and I wish you at all times, and upon all occasions, to communicate interesting occurrences, with your opinions thereon (in the manner you have designated), with the utmost unreservedness to me.

If the augmented force was not intended as an in terrorem measure, the delay in recruiting it is unaccountable, and baffles all conjecture on reasonable grounds. The zeal and enthusiasm which were excited by the publication of the dispatches from our commissioners at Paris (which gave birth to the law authorizing the raising of twelve regiments, &c.) are evaporated—and if this dull season, when men are idle from want of employment, and from that cause might be induced to enlist, is suffered to pass away also, we shall, by and by, when the business of agriculture and other avocations call for the labor of them, set out as a forlorn hope to execute this business.

Had the formation of the army followed closely the passage

of this act, and recruiting orders had trod on the heels of that, the men which might have been raised at that time, would, in point of numbers, have been equal to any in the world; inasmuch as the most reputable yeomanry of the country were ready to have stepped forward with alacrity.

Now the measure is not only viewed with indifference, but deemed unnecessary by that class of people whose attentions being turned to other matters, the officers who, in August and September, could, with ease, have enlisted whole companies of them, will find it difficult to recruit any; and if this idle and dissipated season is spent in inactivity, none but the riff-raff of the country and the scape-gallowses of the large cities will be to be had.

Far removed from the scene, I might ascribe these delays to wrong causes, and therefore will hazard no opinion respecting them; but I have no hesitation in pronouncing that, unless a material change takes place, our military theatre affords but a gloomy prospect to those who are to perform the principal parts in the drama. Sincerely and affectionately,

I am always yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

MOUNT VERNON, Feb. 26, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your letter of the 18th inst. yesterday. You refer me to inclosed letters for information on the subject therein mentioned. One letter only came, and that under a seal to General Lee, which I shall forward, unopened, to-morrow by my nephew, Mr. Bushrod Washington, who is a neighbor of his.

Having written to you yesterday both an official and private

letter, I have only to add in this, that with sincere esteem and affectionate regard,

I am, my dear Sir, always yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

GENERAL HAMILTON.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, March 4, 1799.

Our opinions do not differ upon a very important subject that has more than once been mentioned in our correspondence. I am entirely ignorant of the sentiments of the President, though I have again and again treated of it, and sometimes with earnestness, in my dispatches. This silence gives me some inquietude. Mr. G. will send you the reflections that have occurred to him, and will also explain the motives for putting them into your hands. I cannot at this distance decide upon the expediency of publishing these reflections, but I am much inclined to recommend it, as all our conjectures, explained and confirmed by every thing we see, enjoin upon us to look for safety only in our own courage and upon our own continent.

With perfect regard and attachment, &c.

HAMILTON TO KNOX.

NEW-YORK, March 14, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR:

The inclosed letters, as I concluded from others which accompanied them, have been a long time getting to hand. There was a moment when their object seemed to present itself as one not entirely chimerical; but the probability has diminished. 'Tis however a thing on which the mind may still speculate as in the

chapter of extraordinary events which characterize the present wonderful epoch.

My judgment tells me I ought to be silent on a certain subject; but my heart advises otherwise, and my heart has always been the master of my judgment. Believe me I have felt much pain at the idea, that any circumstance personal to me should have deprived the public of your services or occasioned to you the smallest dissatisfaction. Be persuaded, also, that the views of others, not my own, have given shape to what has taken place—and that there has been a serious struggle between my respect and attachment for you and the impression of duty. This sounds, I know, like affectation, but it is nevertheless the truth. In a case in which such great public interests were concerned, it seemed to me the dictate of reason and propriety, not to exercise an opinion of my own, but to leave that of others, who could influence the issue, to take a free course. In saying this much, my only motive is to preserve, if I may, a claim on your friendly disposition towards me, and to give you some evidence that my regard for you is unabated. Adieu, my dear Sir.

Very much yours.

ST. CLAIR TO HAMILTON.

CINCINNATI, March 14th, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

Under the same cover with this I have taken the liberty to inclose to you some observations of mine on a letter from George Nicholas, of Kentucky, to his friend in Virginia. You will perceive that I have treated you very familiarly, but I am under no apprehension that the purpose will be mistaken. It was a mortification that I could not get them out in proper time, when I had the vanity to suppose they might have done some good further abroad than Kentucky. The severity of the winter, which disappointed the printer in paper, was the cause. It will not now

miss entirely of effect in the country for which it was chiefly intended.

Be that as it may, it has afforded me an opportunity, which I embrace with great pleasure, of assuring you of the great regard with which I ever am,

Dear Sir, &c.

VAN RENSSELAER TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, March 15th, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

The Assembly have a bill for electing electors of President and Vice-President. It will pass. Are you of opinion that it would be proper for the Senate to concur? Unless New-York gives us a different representation, the Federalists are lost.—Whether we have any object now since the late conduct of the President, you are a better judge than we. If it is, however, necessary, that we should still persevere, pray let me hear from you. Our friends are extremely pressing that I should write to you on this subject. Mr. Sedgwick called on me for papers which you was to transmit to my care.

Yours affectionately,

STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, March 21st, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

It is a good principle for the United States to employ directly its own means, only do not let this be carried so far as to confine it to the use of inadequate means, or to embarrass the auxiliary means which circumstances may require.

The idea of the late President's administration of considering the Governor of each State as the first general of the militia, and its immediate organ in acting upon the militia, was wisely considered, and in my opinion, wisely adopted, and well to be adhered to. In its final operation, it will obviate many difficulties and collisions, and by enhancing their importance, tend to draw the State Executives to the general government. Take good care that in the present instance the force be not inadequate.

STEUBEN TO HAMILTON.

NEW-YORK, March 27th, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

At the request of the Marquis de Rouvrai, I forward to you the inclosed memoir relatif to the emigrands of the French islands, now in this country.

It appears to me that this object will become as interesting to the United States as it is to these unhappy refugees, to be reinstated in their possessions and property. How far the propositions of the Marquis may be practicable in the execution, I will not venture to say. But I believe we should endeavor to get rid of these guests as soon as possible.

The plan of the harbor, with the proposed fortifications at the Narrows, shall be forwarded to you in the beginning of the next week.

You will oblige me, my dear sir, by a line in answer to the receipt of the inclosed memoir.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 1st, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

* * * * General McPherson, it is said, will march on Wednesday. I am grieved when I think of the situation of the government. An affair which ought to have been settled at once, will cost much time, and perhaps be so managed as to encourage other and formidable rebellions. We have no President here, and the appearances of languor and indecision are discouraging to the friends of government. Mr. McHenry does the best in his power, yet his operations are such as to confirm more and more a belief of utter unfitness for the situation.

The President has been informed of the disorders in that department, yet there appears no disposition to apply any correction. Expense, discord, and a general loss of influence, will, I fear, be the only traits of the regulations adopted by Congress, for the interior defence of the country.

In this State, affairs bear an unpleasant aspect. The Governor is habitually intoxicated every day, and most commonly every forenoon. Dallas and Judge McKean possess the efficient powers of the government. The former has written to several magistrates, that setting up *liberty posts*, as they are called, is no crime, if done peaceably. The judge is in pretty open collision with the mayor, who is a good man. On Saturday night, Brown, &c., were attacked in a most violent and cruel manner in their houses. The mayor ordered the men to prison, but on Saturday morning they were enlarged by Judge McKean. In short, McKean and Dallas mean to have it understood, that they are determined to support all the turbulent and flagitious of the community. I am not without hopes that this violent conduct will open the eyes of the people. If it does not, we shall soon have serious trouble in Pennsylvania.

You know the state of things in the country, the public opinion, the disposition of the President; if any thing can and ought to be done, and I can be of any service, I will do it, however unpleasant.

I received the inclosed this morning, and have shown it to Mr. McHenry. He says that the men are under your orders, and will leave Windsor immediately.

When you have read this, be pleased to burn it, to prevent accident.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

New-York, April 4th, 1799.

Sir:

I observe, by the Boston papers, that some dispatches have been lately found on board a vessel from this port which was carried into Gibraltar. The late consul here, Mr. Rosier, has just been with me, and suggested that the dispatches are probably from him, and allude (but without naming me) to some conversations with me relating to his being received as consul-general some time last winter. Being so much engaged as not to have been able conveniently to call upon you, I mentioned the subject while in Philadelphia to Mr. Wolcott, and was informed by him that Mr. Rosier could not then be received. In the interviews respecting this object, some general conversation took place about the state of things between the two countries. Mr. Rosier will write to you offering the means of deciphering his dispatches, which he assures me, with every appearance of candor, will be found to contain nothing unfriendly to this country. It is his wish, in the mean time, that no idea may circulate of his being a conspirator.

KING TO HAMILTON.

London, May 22, 1799.

Dear Sir:

War is again declared by France against the temporizing cabinet of Vienna, and this has been the signal for Prussia to resume her former system of insecure neutrality.

We may every hour expect the result of a battle between Jourdan and the Archduke, who, according to our last accounts, were respectively advancing upon each other. The first blow has been unfortunate for the allies. The whole of the Austrian corps, 5000, at Coire, in the country of the Gascons, having fallen into the hands of the French, commanded by Massena. I wish that I felt more confident that this first success would not be followed by more important victories. The 25,000 Russians, who were some time in the neighborhood of Vienna, are on their march for Italy, where Suwarrow, an old Russian officer, is to command the combined armies.

If Prussia, with the north of Germany, which together have an army of more than 300,000 men, had joined heartily and honestly in the league against France, the Directory might have been shaken; but my hopes are weaker than my fears with regard to the partial and ill-joined confederacy with which it is at present engaged.

The publication of the treaty of Campo Formio, so disgraceful to the court of Vienna, will prove hurtful to the Directory, by confirming the jealousy of Prussia, and exciting distrust of the Emperor throughout Germany, the interest and safety of which was sacrificed by that treaty.

M'HENRY TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

June 26th, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR:

I find, from frequent and repeated conversations, that we have not been able to remove any one of the prejudices entertained by the Secretary of the Treasury against the augmentation of the army; that he thinks, or seems to think, that the means or measures of the United States, which *can be called forth* without annual loans, are inadequate to the expenditures required for the

support of the army and navy, consequently that some part of the one or the other must soon be suspended or dropped, and that he even contemplates a statement of facts relative to our means to the President. I regret all this from the bottom of my soul, feeling as I do how much our peace, honor, and respect at home and abroad depends upon the permanency of our little army. I continue in the course which I had prescribed to myself, determined to intermit or suspend indispensable measures, only when officially informed of its being no longer in the competency of the Treasury means to support them, or answer the requisite demands. The Secretary tells me, that notwithstanding his opinion about the army, he will not do any thing to prejudice his friends or the public against it;—I reason in all the forms I can think of, and I have thought it proper to keep throwing into form paragraphs tending to show the necessity of an army.

I know not how all this is to end. It will be mortifying, if we have to retrograde, although under an act of Congress. I consider it necessary to apprise you of the state of opinions here, and to request your aid to the eastward, to keep up a due sense of the propriety of the measure among our friends in that quarter. The Secretary of State thinks right; at least I have seen no indications to the contrary. Mr. Goodrich has the following paragraph in a letter I received from him this morning. "The recruiting service is proceeding successfully in this State. The sooner the troops can be withdrawn from the towns, embodied, disciplined, and employed, the less speculation will be excited about the army."

I think the plan heretofore recommended ought to be attended to. I mean to hasten the recruits to their respective regimental rendezvous.

Yours, &c.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, July 15, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

The French still maintain themselves in Switzerland, and though unless soon and strongly reinforced, they will be driven out of it. The success of the allies has been almost uninterrupted in Italy, from whence, according to present appearances, the enemy must in a short time be totally expelled. Thus far, the coalition has performed prodigies; but the confederates are not without mutual jealousies, which will increase with their success, and which already has had the effect of preventing an agreement upon a precise and ultimate object. Between England and Russia the greatest union and confidence exist; and these powers do not disagree in what ought to be the end to be aimed at and avowed. An uncommon coldness, and even more than coldness, exists between Austria and England; and between the former and Russia there is less cordiality than could be wished and expected. The issue of the campaign, for these reasons, is less certain than it would be were the allies heartily and disinterestedly engaged in the only species of war that can give peace and security to the different nations of Europe.

It is extremely difficult yet to understand the late changes at Paris. There are persons who see in them the death-blow of French republicanism. I doubt very much this opinion, and am inclined to consider the last in the same light as I have done the former revolutions. I did expect that the changes would be followed by measures of more energy than have been adopted. There seems to be no reason to suppose that we are likely to be benefited by the revolution. Seiyes' opinions concerning America are no secret, and they give us no room to expect a treatment different from that we have so long and so patiently endured. The inclosure relates to a subject that I cease to write or talk of, for reasons that you will be at no loss to conjecture.

KING TO HAMILTON.

July 31st, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

You will believe that I have been much gratified with the late intelligence from home. France has calculated all her plans on our disunion, and the expectation that her friends, if not more numerous, would be more active, and possess greater energy, than the friends of our government; or rather, she has believed that our government, like that of every country that she has succeeded to overturn and enslave, would act with such timidity, and in so qualified a manner, that the affections and support of the people would be easily withdrawn from, and even turned against it. If the government continue to speak and act with decision, the people will become more and more united, and still better inclined to execute its purposes. This opinion should be taken in connection with an observation (the importance of which appears to me the greater the oftener I consider it) that I have suggested in more than one of my late letters. The composition of addresses, and the forming of volunteer associations, who will have nothing to do, are for the present well, but they will cease to be novelties, and soon become tiresome; and, to be secure, you must have some sufficient object that will interest and employ the passions of the nation. The mere defensive system of the enemies of France has been a principal cause of her success, and if we adopt the error, we shall be exposed to greater *risks* than by a bold and active system, which, exclusive of being the most certain means of safety, would promise the acquisition of great and lasting advantages.

The destiny of the new world, and I have a full and firm persuasion that it will be both happy and glorious, is in our hands. We have a right, and it is our duty, to deliberate, and to act not as secondaries, but as principals. The object and the occasion are such as we ought not, in respect to ourselves or others, to suffer to pass unimproved.

I have nothing to observe in reference to the subject of regret and complaint mentioned in your last letters. You will not doubt that all the means in my power have been employed to correct the mischief—they have served only to convince me that it is incorrigible. It is an evil too deeply rooted, and too powerfully protected to be cured: and it is something gained to know that it is so. If we are wise, we shall hasten the events that will place the remedy in our own hands.

A frigate returning from Malta to Toulon with dispatches and a general officer, has been captured by an English frigate, and we are told that Buonaparte had sailed on his expedition two days before the English fleet that pursues him arrived there. If so, the French fleet is in great danger. Many persons think that great events depend on the success or failure of Buonaparte's expedition. All the late accounts from Paris say, a new storm is at hand, but none express a hope that the changes it may effect will make the condition of France or of others better. Gerry still hangs about the Directory! At Rastadt the Congress continues, and the jealousies between Austria and Prussia, artfully kept alive by the common enemy, prevents that hearty union, without which no successful co-operation will take place against France.

In Ireland the rebellion is suppressed, and our government will, I hope, have the power and the inclination to exclude those disaffected characters who will be suffered to seek an asylum among us. England is more than ever united, and resolves, with confidence in the superiority of her resources, to prosecute the war. There is no talk of peace—nor is there any appearance which would lead to an opinion that new overtures for that purpose are likely soon to be made.

On the other hand, France is undoubtedly extremely embarrassed any longer to find the money necessary to maintain her army, and carry on the war.

Be so kind as to present my affectionate respects and congratulations to the Governor. I ought to write to him, but I consider a letter to him or you as nearly the same.

With great truth and atttachment, &c.

P. S.—We have just heard that Gerry has received his passport. At the close of Talleyrand's letter sending it, he says, though the Directory, as a measure of precaution, had laid an embargo on all American vessels, telle est la repugnance du directoire à considérer les Etats Unis comme ennemis, qui malgré leurs démonstrations hostiles, il veut attendre qu'il y voit irresistiblement forcé par des hostilités réelles!

HAMILTON TO HOFFMAN.

1799.

SIR:

"Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser" of this morning contains a publication entitled "Extract of a Letter from Philadelphia, dated September 20th," which charges me with being at the "bottom of an effort recently made to suppress the *Aurora*" (a newspaper of that city) by pecuniary means.

It is well known that I have long been the object of the most malignant calumnies of the faction opposed to our government through the medium of the papers devoted to their views. Hitherto, I have forborne to resort to the laws for the punishment of the authors or abettors, and were I to consult personal considerations alone, I should continue in this course, repaying hatred with contempt.

But public motives now compel me to a different conduct. The designs of that faction to overturn our government, and with it the great pillars of social security and happiness in this country, become every day more manifest; and have of late acquired a system which renders them formidable.

One principal engine for effecting the scheme is, by audacious falsehoods to destroy the confidence of the people in all those who are in any degree conspicuous among the supporters of the government—an engine which has been employed in time past with too much success, and which, unless counteracted in future, is likely to be attended with very fatal consequences.

To counteract it is therefore a duty to the community. Among the specimens of this contrivance, that which is the subject of the present letter demands peculiar attention. A bolder calumny, one more absolutely destitute of foundation, was never propagated; and its dangerous tendency needs no comment, being calculated to inspire the belief that the independence and liberty of the press are endangered by the intrigues of ambitious citizens aided by foreign gold. In so flagrant a case the force of the laws must be tried.

I therefore request, that you will take immediate measures towards the prosecution of the persons who conduct the inclosed paper.

With great confidence, I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant, &c.

JOSIAH O. HOFFMAN, Esq., Attorney-General.

HAMILTON TO WASHINGTON.

NEW-YORK, October 21st, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

On my return from Trenton the day before yesterday, I found your private letter of the 13th, as well as your public letter of the 15th inst.

The newspapers have probably informed you that poor Avery is dead of the yellow fever.

The President has resolved to send the commissioners to France, notwithstanding the change of affairs there. He is not understood to have consulted either of his ministers; certainly not the Secretary of War or Finance; all my calculations lead me to regret the measure. I hope that it may not in its consequences involve the United States in a war on the side of France with her enemies.

My trust in Providence, which has so often interposed in our favor, is my only consolation.

With great respect, &c.

HAMILTON TO LEAR.

NEW-YORK, January 2d, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 15th of December last, was delayed in getting to hand by the circumstance of its having gone to New-York, while I was at Philadelphia, and of its having arrived at Philadelphia after I had set out on my return to New-York.

The very painful event which it announces had, previous to the receipt of it, filled my heart with bitterness. Perhaps no man in this community has equal cause with myself to deplore the loss. I have been much indebted to the kindness of the General, and he was an *Ægis very essential to me.* But regrets are unavailing. For great misfortunes it is the business of reason to seek consolation. The friends of General Washington have very noble ones. If virtue can secure happiness in another world, he is happy. In this, the seal is now put upon *his* glory. It is no longer in jeopardy from the fickleness of fortune.

Adieu, &c.

P. S.—In whose hands are his papers gone? Our very confidential situation will not permit this to be a point of indifference to me.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, January 5, 1800.

It is indeed a long time, my dear sir, since I have written to you, and I feel my obligation to you for the continuance of your correspondence, notwithstanding my delinquency.

Had it been true that I had left every thing else to follow the drum, my delinquency would not have been so great. But our military establishment offers too little inducement, and is too pre-

carious to have permitted a total dereliction of professional pursuits. The double occupation occasioned by these added military duties, and the attention which circumstances call me to pay to collateral objects, engage my time more than ever, and leave me less leisure to communicate with distant friends.

If the projected cipher was established, I should now have very much to say to you. But for this the arrangement is not yet mature. Soon, however, I hope to make it so, by forwarding to you the counterpart, which is in preparation. I must, however, give you some sketch of our affairs.

At home every thing is in the main well; except as to the perverseness and capriciousness of one, and the spirit of faction of many.

Our measures from the first cause are too much the effect of momentary impulse. Vanity and jealousy exclude all counsel. Passion wrests the helm from reason.

The irreparable loss of an inestimable man removes a control which was felt, and was very salutary.

The leading friends of the government are in a sad dilemma. Shall they risk a serious schism by an attempt to change? Or shall they annihilate themselves and hazard their cause by continuing to uphold those who suspect or hate them, and who are likely to pursue a course for no better reason than because it is contrary to that which they approve?

The spirit of faction is abated nowhere. In Virginia it is more violent than ever. It seems demonstrated that the leaders there, who possess completely all the powers of the local government, are resolved to possess those of the national, by the most dangerous combinations; and, if they cannot effect this, to resort to the employment of physical force. The want of disposition in the people to second them, will be the only preventive. It is believed that it will be an effectual one.

In the two houses of Congress we have a decided majority. But the dread of unpopularity is likely to paralyze it, and to prevent the erection of additional buttresses to the Constitution, a fabric which can hardly be stationary, and which will retrograde if it cannot be made to advance.

In the mass of the people the dispositions are not bad. An attachment to the system of peace continues. No project contrary to it could easily conciliate favor. Good-will towards the government, in my opinion, predominates; though a numerous party is still actuated by an opposite sentiment, and some vague discontents have a more diffused influence. Sympathy with the French Revolution acts in a much narrower circle than formerly, but the jealousy of monarchy, which is as actual as ever, still furnishes a handle by which the factions mislead well meaning persons.

In our councils there is no fixed plan. Some are for preserving and invigorating the navy and destroying the army. Some among the friends of government for diminishing both on pecuniary considerations.

My plan is to complete the navy to the contemplated extent; say six ships of the line, twelve frigates, and twenty-four sloops of war; to make no alteration for the present as to the military force; and finally, to preserve the organs of the existing force, reducing the men to a very moderate number. For this plan there are various reasons that appear to me solid. I must doubt, however, that it will finally prevail.

The recent depredations of British cruisers, sanctioned in various instances by the courts, have rekindled in many hearts an animosity which was fast being extinguished. Such persons think they see in this circumstance a new proof that friendship towards this country on the part of Great Britain, will always be measured by the scale of her success. A very perplexing conflict of sensations is the result of this impression.

I must hasten to a conclusion. It was unnecessary for me to have told you that for the loss of our illustrious friend every heart is in mourning. Adieu.

God bless you.

P. S. Who is to be Commander-in Chief?

Not the next in command. The appointment will probably be deferred.

HAMILTON TO MRS. WASHINGTON.

January 12, 1800.

I did not think it proper, madam, to intrude amidst the first effusions of your grief; but I can no longer restrain my sensibility from conveying to you an imperfect expression of my affectionate sympathy in the sorrows you experience. No one better than myself knows the greatness of your loss; or how much your excellent heart is formed to feel it in all its extent. Satisfied that you cannot receive consolation, I will attempt to offer none. Resignation to the will of Heaven, which the practice of your life insures, can alone alleviate the sufferings of so heart-rending an affliction.

There can be few who equally with me participate in the loss you deplore. In expressing this sentiment, I may, without impropriety, allude to the numerous and distinguished marks of confidence and friendship of which you have yourself been a witness, but I cannot say in how many ways the continuance of that confidence and friendship was necessary to me in future relations. Vain, however, are regrets. From a calamity which is common to a mourning nation, who can expect to be exempt? Perhaps it is even a privilege to have a claim to a larger portion of it than others.

I will only add, madam, that I shall esteem it a real and a great happiness if any future occurrence shall enable me to give you proof of that respectful and cordial attachment with which

I have the honor to be,

Your obliged and very obedient servant,

A. H.

Mrs. Martha Washington.

HAMILTON TO BAYARD.

New-York, January 16, 1800.

I was glad to find, my dear sir, by your letter, that you had not yet determined to go, with the consent of the federal party, in support of Mr. Burr; and that you were resolved to hold yourself disengaged, till the moment of final decision. Your resolution to separate yourself in this instance from the federal party, if your conviction shall be strong of the unfitness of Mr. Burr, is certainly laudable. So much does it coincide with my ideas, that if the party shall, by supporting Mr. Burr as President, adopt him for their official chief, I shall be obliged to consider myself as an *isolated* man. It will be impossible for me to reconcile with my motives of *honor* or policy, the continuing to be of a party which, according to my apprehension, will have degraded itself and the country.

I am sure, nevertheless, that the motives of many will be good, and I shall never cease to esteem the individuals, though I shall deplore a step which I fear experience will show to be a very fatal one. Among the letters which I receive, assigning the reasons, *pro* and *con*, for preferring Burr to J., I observe no small exaggeration to the prejudice of the latter, and some things taken for granted as to the former, which are at least questionable. Perhaps, myself the first, at some expense of popularity, to unfold the true character of Jefferson, it is too late for me to become his apologist. Nor can I have any disposition to do it.

I admit that his politics are tinctured with fanaticism; that he is too much in earnest in his democracy; that he has been a mischievous enemy to the principal measures of our past administration; that he is crafty and persevering in his objects; that he is not scrupulous about the means of success, nor very mindful of truth, and that he is a contemptible hypocrite. But, it is not true, as is alleged, that he is an enemy to the power of the Executive, or that he is for confounding all the powers in the House of Representatives. It is a fact, which I have frequently mentioned, that, while we were in the administration together,

he was generally for a large construction of the Executive authority, and not backward to act upon it in cases which coincided with his views. Let it be added, that in his theoretic ideas, he has considered as improper the participations of the Senate in the Executive authority. I have more than once made the reflection, that viewing himself as the reversioner, he was solicitous to come into the possession of a good estate. Nor is it true, that Jefferson is zealot enough to do any thing in pursuance of his principles, which will contravene his popularity or his interest. He is as likely as any man I know, to temporize; to calculate what will be likely to promote his own reputation and advantage, and the probable result of such a temper is the preservation of systems, though originally opposed, which being once established, could not be overturned without danger to the person who did it. To my mind, a true estimate of Mr. Jefferson's character warrants the expectation of a temporizing, rather than a violent system. That Jefferson has manifested a culpable predilection for France, is certainly true; but I think it a question, whether it did not proceed quite as much from her *popularity* among us as from sentiment; and in proportion as that popularity is diminished, his zeal will cool. Add to this, that there is no fair reason to suppose him capable of being corrupted, which is a security that he will not go beyond certain limits. It is not at all improbable, that under the change of circumstances, Jefferson's Gallicism has considerably abated.

As to Burr, these things are admitted, and indeed cannot be denied, that he is a man of *extreme* and *irregular* ambition; that he is *selfish* to a degree which excludes all social affections; and that he is decidedly *profligate*. But it is said, 1st, that he is *artful* and *dexterous* to accomplish his ends; 2d, that he holds no pernicious theories, but is a mere *matter of fact* man; 3d, that his very selfishness* is a guard against mischievous foreign predilections; 4th, that his *local situation* has enabled him to appreciate the utility of our commercial and fiscal systems, and the same quality of selfishness will lead him to support and invigorate

* It is always very dangerous to look at the vices of men for good.

them; 5th, that he is now disliked by the Jacobins; that his elevation will be a mortal stab to them, breed an invincible hatred to him, and compel him to lean on the federalists; 6th, that Burr's ambition will be checked by his good sense, by the manifest impossibility of succeeding in any scheme of usurpation, and that, if attempted, there is nothing to fear from the attempt. These topics are in my judgment more plausible than solid. As to the first point, the fact must be admitted; but those qualities are objections rather than recommendations, when they are under the direction of bad principles. As to the second point, too much is taken for granted. If Burr's conversation is to be credited, he is not very far from being a visionary. He has quoted to me *Connecticut* as an example of the success of the democratic theory, and as authority, serious doubts whether it was not a good one. It is ascertained, in some instances, that he has talked perfect *Godwinism*. I have myself heard him speak with applause of the French system, as unshackling the mind, and leaving it to its natural energies; and I have been present when he has contended against banking systems* with earnestness, and with the same arguments that Jefferson would use.

The truth is, that Burr is a man of a very subtile imagination, and a mind of this make is rarely free from ingenious whimsies. Yet I admit that he has no fixed theory, and that his peculiar notions will easily give way to his interest. But is it a recommendation to have *no theory?* Can that man be a systematic or able statesman who has none? I believe not. *No general principles* will hardly work much better than erroneous ones.

As to the third point, it is certain that Burr, generally speaking, has been as warm a partisan of France as Jefferson; that he has, in some instances, shown himself to be so with passion. But if it was from calculation, who will say that his calculations will not continue him so? His selfishness,† so far from

* Yet he has lately by a trick established a *bank*—a perfect monster in its principles, but a very convenient instrument of *profit and influence*.

† Unprincipled selfishness is more apt to seek rapid gain in disorderly practices than slow advantages from orderly systems.

being an obstacle, may be a prompter. If corrupt, as well as selfish, he may be a partisan for gain. If ambitious, as well as selfish, he may be a partisan for the sake of aid to his views. No man has trafficked more than he in the floating passions of the multitude. Hatred to Great Britain and attachment to France in the public mind, will naturally lead a man of his selfishness, attached to place and power, to favor France, and oppose Great Britain. The Gallicism of many of our patriots is to be thus resolved, and, in my opinion, it is morally certain that Burr will continue to be influenced by this calculation.

As to the fourth point, the instance I have cited with respect to banks, proves that the argument is not to be relied upon. If there was much in it, why does Chancellor Livingston maintain that we ought not to cultivate navigation, but ought to let foreigners be our carriers? France is of this opinion too; and Burr, for some reason or other, will be very apt to be of the opinion of France.

As to the fifth point, nothing can be more fallacious. It is demonstrated by recent facts* that Burr is *solicitous* to keep upon *anti-federal* ground to avoid compromitting himself by any engagements† with the federalists. With or without such engagements he will easily persuade his former friends, that he does stand on that ground; and after their first resentment, they will be glad to rally under him. In the mean time he will take care not to disoblige them; and he will always court those among them who are best fitted for tools. He will never choose to lean on good men, because he knows that they will never support his bad projects, but instead of this, he will endeavor to disorganize both parties, and to form out of them a third, composed of men fitted by their characters to be conspirators and instruments of such projects.

That this will be his future conduct may be inferred from his past plan, and from the admitted quality of irregular ambition. Let it be remembered that Mr. Burr has never appeared solicitous

* My letter to Mr. Morris states some of them.

† He trusts to their *prejudices* and *hopes* for support.

for fame, and that great ambition, unchecked by principle, or the love of glory, is an unruly tyrant, which never can keep long in a course which good men will approve. As to the last point, the proposition is against the experience of all times. Ambition without principle, never was long under the guidance of good sense. Besides that, really, the force of Mr. Burr's understanding is much overrated. He is far more *cunning* than *wise*—far more *dexterous* than *able*.

[*Very, very confidential.*—In my opinion he is inferior in real ability to Jefferson. There are also facts against the supposition. It is past all doubt, that he has blamed me for not having improved the situation I once was in to change the government. That when answered that this could not have been done without guilt, he replied, "Les grands âmes se soucient peu des petits moraux;" that when told the thing was never practicable, from the genius and situation of the country, he answered, "that depends on the estimate we form of the human passions, and of the means of influencing them." Does this prove that Mr. Burr would consider a scheme of usurpation as visionary?]

The truth is, with great apparent coldness he is the most sanguine man in the world. He thinks every thing possible to adventure and perseverance: and though I believe he will fail, I think it almost certain he will attempt usurpation, and the attempt will involve great mischief. But there is one point of view which seems to me decisive. If the anti-federalists, who prevailed in the election, are left to take their own man, they remain responsible, and the federalists remain *free*, *united*, and without *stain*, in a situation to resist, with effect, pernicious measures. If the federalists substitute Burr, they adopt him, and become answerable for him. Whatever may be the theory of the case abroad and at *home*, (for so from the beginning will be taught,) Mr. Burr must become *in fact* the man of our party; and if he acts ill, we must share in the blame and disgrace. By adopting him, we do all we can to reconcile the minds of the federalists to him, and we prepare them for the effectual operation of his

arts. He will, doubtless, gain many of them; and the federalists will become a disorganized and contemptible party. Can there be any serious question between the policy of leaving the anti-federalists to be answerable for the elevation of an objectionable man, and that of adopting ourselves, and becoming answerable for a man who, on all hands, is acknowledged to be a complete Catiline? 'Tis enough to state the question to indicate the answer, if reason, not passion, presides in the decision.

You may communicate this and my former letter to discreet and confidential friends.

Yours very truly,

A. H.

TOBIAS LEAR TO HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, January 16th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 2d instant did not get to my hands till last evening. I had anticipated the reasons for my letter of the 15th December being so long in reaching you.

No one living besides yourself knows as well as I do the loss which *you* have sustained by the General's death; and I know at the same time that no man under these circumstances could find a greater resource in himself than you can.

Make yourself easy, my dear sir, respecting the confidential communications which have passed between you and the General. They have never passed under the eye of any person but him and myself. Papers of this kind have always been kept separate from the mass. To Judge Washington the General left by will all his public and private papers. A few hours before his death he observed to him—"I am about to change the scene. I cannot last long. I believed from the first the attack would be fatal. Do you arrange all my papers and accounts, as you know more about these things than any one else."

LEAR TO HAMILTON.

January 23d, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

Mrs. Washington has put into my hands your letter of the 12th instant, and requests me to acknowledge the receipt of it.

While she expresses the most grateful sensibility for your kind and affectionate condolence, she is sensible that your loss, as well as hers, is irreparable. In resigning herself to the dispensation of Divine Providence, she looks up for consolation to that Being, whose hand is the rod of affliction and the balm of comfort.

The offer of your services, if in any occurrence you can be useful to her, is received with gratitude and thankfulness; and she begs that you and Mrs. Hamilton will accept her prayers and best wishes for your health and happiness.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

LA GRANGE, 20th *nivose*, February 10th, 1800.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

I have not, since my return to France, received a line from you; yet I am sure you are affectionately interested in every account which concerns me. The departure of Mr. Pichon for the United States affords me a good opportunity to write. He has much pleased me by his eager wishes and useful exertions for a reconciliation between both countries.

He speaks of America and Americans in terms gratifying to my feelings, and has expressed himself particularly desirous to come to you with a letter from your old and constant friend. You have, no doubt, received the news of the negotiation between the United States and France, and the intelligence must have been personally given by one of the ministers who have

been employed in it. A continental peace, in Europe, is the result of a series of French victories. The Rhine shall be our frontier. The new Italian republic will probably be otherwise disposed of. There is hope of a British negotiation. This government does earnestly wish to put every where an end to the war. The late attempt against the life of Bonaparte, by threatening the tranquillity of the citizens at large, has made him more popular. It is evident in the moral state of the nation, that none but the two extreme parties could have improved the event, which being prepared by the terrorists, would have, at least for some time, given them a tremendous chance of power, unless it had been taken by the garrison. You may conceive how every honest man has been affected on hearing of a plot, the object and the circumstances of which were equally detestable. Oh, my dear friend, preserve your liberties; do not let party spirit and personal hatreds be carried further than the proper balance in a wise, virtuous commonwealth, that you may have nothing to do with the diseases, nor even with the medicines. My whole heart is in the wishes I form for the continuation of your political, social, personal freedom, dignity, and happiness.

The opinion of several American friends, particularly General Washington and you, the situation of my French companions who had not, as I had, another country they could call their own, did, as you know, keep me in Europe until the revolution of *Brumaire*. The professions of liberty and justice which accompanied it, made it decent and of course proper for me to return to France. My companions have been erased from the fatal list; my friends have re-entered the barrier of public places, and in the mixture which Bonaparte has thought political to make, he has given a majority to honest men. As to myself, I was on the day of my arrival, and I am more and more every day, determined for a life of perfect retirement. It has been said that I was going to America as an ambassador. My feelings and my habits in the United States I could not reconcile to the acting a foreign character however friendly, nor could I with ease to myself, either within or without, put off my Ame-

rican regimentals. I may be a happy visitor, and so I shall one day or other, but am not fit to be an ambassador of the one country to the other.

I feel better than it can be expected, which joined to the bad health of my wife and her inability to cross the seas, puts the matter on the footing of impossibility. It has also been reported I was intended for, and several friends had wished me in the public places of this constitutional establishment. I was totally a stranger to the framing of it. I have earned my right to a life of tranquillity, and am determined not to see myself be decoyed or persuaded out of it. As to the command of armies, there are now in France so many good generals, Bonaparte and Moreau have been endowed with military abilities so prodigious and so successful, that it were out of the question for me to think, at this late hour of the war, of reassuming the staff. It was not the case with George; he serves in the army of Italy as an officer of hussars, and has been lately engaged in the action of the passages of Rivers, which you will find in the papers.

I am, therefore, and shall remain a farmer. My wife, my two daughters, son-in-law, and a little granddaughter, are with me in a solitary country-place, upwards of forty miles from Paris, where I am visited by some of my friends, and where I live very happy amongst rural employments and rural studies, of which I am very fond. My visits to the capital are rare, and short. I am on good terms with the First Consul, my deliverer from Olmutz, who has recalled my companions, and behaves very obligingly by me; but I do not in any degree, nor in any way, meddle with public affairs. I wish Bonaparte may seek and find in the establishment of true freedom the complement of his glory as well as the security of his person and of a legal power—either for liberty the safest and the nearest chance. As to foreign politics, the superiority of France is unrivalled; her resources are immense; the intentions of her government are sincere and generous; and I think particularly well disposed towards the United States—an opinion of mine the less to be prejudiced, as I have no participation in her councils.

My abode is the inheritance of my unfortunate mother-in-law.

What remained of my property when I left France has been, for the greatest part, sold and dilapidated. I have many debts to pay—yet will I in the end have enough for my family and myself to live upon; not enough, however, to manage my farm in the elegant style which would suit my agricultural taste. But whatever be my private circumstances, I shall stick to the plough and to a life of retirement.

Now, my dear friend, may I hope that you will, in return, give me minute details of every thing that concerns you. Be pleased to remind me to our brother soldiers who have not forgotten their long absent comrade; to my American friends about you; present my affectionate respects to Mrs. Hamilton and her sister. I trust this letter, which I send by post to L'Orient, will arrive safely with Mr. Pichon. Government has great confidence in him; and I have been much pleased with his acquaintance. May the connection between the two countries be improved; as it is natural and easy to do it, for the mutual interest, honor, and happiness of both.

With all the sentiments which have for so long a time attatched me to you, I am, my dear Hamilton,

Your friend,

LA FAYETTE.

Mr. Pichon has lately married a young and amiable lady, who accompanies him. I have foretold her she will be very well liked in America, and I do not fear to be mistaken in my prediction.

HAMILTON TO SWAN.

February 17th, 1800.

SIR:

I have been applied to by an old soldier, who served during the revolutionary war, on the subject of pay which he states to be still due to him.

He mentions to me, that he enlisted for the war in the regiment commanded by Colonel Livingston, and that he was transferred in the course of the war from that regiment to the one under Colonel Weisenfelt. His claim is to two years' pay for his services in the first of these regiments, and to nine months' pay for his services in the last. He states, that he applied to the paymasters, but was prevented from obtaining his claim by having been returned among the dead. You will be pleased to inform me whether the door is yet open for claims of this nature. The person states, that he should have applied at an earlier day, had he known that he was returned among the dead. This circumstance came to his knowledge but about four years since.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

NEW-YORK, February 27th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

When will Congress probably adjourn? Will any thing be settled as to a certain *election?* Will my presence be requisite as to this or any other purpose, and when?

I observe more and more, that by the jealousy and envy of some, the miserliness of others, and the concurring influence of *all foreign powers*, America, if she attains to greatness, must *creep* to it. Will it be so? Slow and sure is no bad maxim. Snails are a wise generation.

P. S. Unless for indispensable reasons, I had rather not come.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

La Grange, March 7th, 1800.

My Dear Hamilton:

Madame de Fleury, widow to our gallant friend, having imparted to me her intention to address the government of the United States, is pleased to think that letters from me, and one particularly to you, might serve her purpose. I am sure the American citizens, and above all our brother soldiers, need not being reminded of the brilliant and useful services which the late Gen. Fleury had the happiness to render. Unfortunate it is for Madame Fleury that her application can no more be patronized by *him* whose lamentable loss to mankind, is to you, to all his personal friends, to me, his adopted and loving son, so desolately deplorable. The great and deserved share you had in his confidence, the obligations which Col. Fleury has often been under to your esteem and friendship, entitle you to receive and promote any proper demand that the worthy widow finds herself by her situation and the merits of her husband warranted to present.

I am most affectionately, dear Hamilton, yours,

La Fayette.

GEN. LEE TO HAMILTON.

Philadelphia, March 5th, 1800.

* * * * It gives me pain to find you so despondent. Certainly you cannot regard the calumnies of your enemies. This to them would be high gratification. Nor ought you to despond of your country. We have heretofore prospered when surrounded by infinitely greater difficulties, in contributing to which prosperity no man alive has done more than yourself.

Be then more like yourself, and resist to victory all your foes. It would give me great pleasure to see you here, and I had ex-

pected that official duty would have brought you among us a second time during the winter. We are now engaged in the little pitiful business of the Irish murderer Nash, and I fear much of our time will be spent in this dirty affair.

Yours affectionately,

H. LEE.

HAMILTON TO LEE.

NEW-YORK, March 7th, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

The letters to which you allude in yours of the 5th instant, have never been seen by me. The truth is, that I pay very little attention to such newspaper ebullitions, unless some friend points out a particular case which may demand attention.

But be assured once for all, that it is not easy for these miscreants to impair the confidence in, and friendship for you, which are long habits of my mind; so that you may join me in looking with indifference upon their malicious efforts.

You have mistaken a little an observation in my last. Believe me, that I feel no despondency of any sort. As to the country, it is too young and vigorous to be quacked out of its political health—and as to myself, I feel that I stand on ground which, sooner or later, will insure me a triumph over all my enemies.

But in the mean time I am not wholly insensible of the injustice which I from time to time experience, and of which, in my opinion, I am at this moment the victim.

Perhaps my sensibility is the effect of an exaggerated estimate of my services to the United States; but on such a subject a man will judge for himself; and if he is misled by his vanity, he must be content with the mortifications to which it exposes him. In no event, however, will any displeasure I may feel, be at war with the public interest. This in my eyes is sacred. Adieu.

HAMILTON TO WILLIAM SMITH.

NEW-YORK, March 11th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

You will probably have heard, before this reaches you, that I had appointed Captain Izard one of my aids. I part with him to you with all the reluctance that a strong impression of his merit can inspire. Yet I do not resist his going, because our military prospects in general, and mine in particular, are very uncertain.

Though we have had no communication since your departure, you may be assured that I have not ceased to interest myself in your welfare. If you go to Constantinople, I wish you good luck. It is, perhaps, past the time for you to play the false *Ibrahim*. You see I am in a humor to laugh. What can we do better in *this best of all possible worlds?* Should you even be shut up in the seven towers, or get the plague, if you are a true philosopher you will consider this only as laughing matter. Adieu.

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, March 12, 1800.

SIR:

I have written to you heretofore respecting Mr. Benjamin Wells, who acted as an excise officer, in the western part of Pennsylvania, at the time of the disturbances there. But this gentleman has just arrived here, and requests me to mention his case again to you. I comply with his request.

It appeared from what I saw and heard at the time, that Mr. Wells distinguished himself by persevering exertion to carry the laws into effect. He was of course marked out as an object of vengeance. The losses which he sustained were very considerble, and proceeded from the zeal he had displayed in

support of the government. To repair his losses and reward his zeal, is therefore a duty imposed on the government by the principles both of justice and policy. It is imposed by justice—for the injuries were committed by persons in disguise, or under circumstances which render it impossible to discover the offenders. It is vain, therefore, to refer Mr. Wells to the individuals by whose acts he suffered. This is to tell him that his losses will never be repaired.

Policy speaks in this case the same language with justice. Mr. Wells suffered in consequence of his efforts to support the government, and of his attention to duty. Will the government then refuse to make him compensation? To do so, will be to violate the plainest maxims of policy, as it will effectually damp the zeal of public officers in every future case of difficulty. It is not to be expected that individuals will expose their persons to violence, and their property to destruction, in support of a government that has not generosity sufficient to reward those who suffer in its cause.

There appears to me to be no doubt of the meritorious exertions of Mr. Wells, even if there were some doubt, yet the excellent effect which the measure is calculated to produce on public officers, will prove a full compensation for the money that may be advanced. I recollect to have mentioned to Mr. Wells, and other persons in the same capacity, that I considered the government as bound to indemnify them. So far, therefore, as my opinion could pledge the government, it was pledged. In giving this opinion I thought I was promoting the best interests of the nation, and it appears to me that the government will very widely mistake its policy in refusing to allow these men all reasonable claims.

HAMILTON TO GEN. PINCKNEY.

(PRIVATE.)

NEW-YORK, April 10, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I am perfectly content with the delay of communication to the Rev. Mr. Hill till the effect of your experiments with the Secretary of War shall be known.

I have heard nothing as to the impression made by our mission to France upon the combined powers; but I cannot doubt that it is a disagreeable one, and certainly the course of events lately has not said much for the good policy of the measure. This calculation of the President on a general peace, as the main argument for what was done, proves at least to be as fallacious as I ventured to predict to him just after he had resolved to consummate the error. Capt. Izard has accepted his appointment under Mr. Smith, and has sailed for Europe.

Mrs. H. and myself have learned with great pleasure the amendment of Mrs. P.'s health. Offer her and accept yourself our felicitations and best wishes.

Adieu, &c.

CARROLL TO HAMILTON.

ANNAPOLIS, 18th April, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

* * * * We have strange reports circulated among us respecting the prevalence of Jacobinical principles in your State. It is asserted with confidence by the anti-federal party here, that all your electors will vote for Mr. Jefferson as President. If such an event should really happen, it is probable he will be chosen. Of such a choice, the consequences to this country may be dreadful. Mr. Jefferson is too theoretical and fanciful a statesman to direct with steadiness and prudence the affairs of this extensive and growing confederacy. He might safely try

his experiments, without much inconvenience in the little republic of St. Marino, but his fantastic tricks would dissolve this Union. Perhaps the miseries of France, and more especially the government of Buonaparte, may have weaned him from his predilection for revolutions. I once saw a letter of his, in which, amongst several others, was contained this strange sentiment,—"that to preserve the liberties of a people, a revolution once in a century was necessary." A man of this way of thinking may be said to be fond of revolutions; yet, possibly, were he the chief magistrate, he might not wish for a revolution during his presidency.

I beg my respects to Mrs. Hamilton, and to be kindly remembered to General Schuyler.

I am, with very great regard and esteem,

Dear Sir, your most humble servant,

CHARLES CARROLL, of Carrollton.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

April 25, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I send you the paragraph of a newspaper just published. I hope it is an electioneering lie; but as it is likely to do mischief, I will thank you, by return of post, to inform me whether you have any thing to confirm or refute, and particularly whether you have heard of the list with which Commodore Truxton's name is connected.

(*Copy of inclosed paragraph.*)

NEW HAVEN, April 15.

Capt. James Stewart, of Chatham, in the brig Sally, arrived at New London on the 4th instant, from Jamaica, brings the most unpleasant accounts from that quarter. He states that the British capture all American vessels that afford the

slightest pretext for condemnation, and impress all their seamen without discrimination. Capt. Stewart was taken by his majesty's ship Acasto, of 44 guns, the commander of which, Edward Fellows, came on board the Sally himself, ordered Capt. Stewart's chest open, and, with his own hands, took out 4250 dollars, besides plundering the captain of other articles.

On the arrival of the brig at Kingston, every man on board, except the captain and boy, all natives of Connecticut, were impressed, and are left there. Capt. Nathan Allyn, of Groton, had all his people impressed, with their protections in their hands. Capt. Waterman, of New-York, was treated in the same manner, with many others. And Mr. Savage, the American agent in Kingston, informed Capt. Stewart that he had forwarded to the Secretary of State, by Commodore Truxton, an attested list of the names of one thousand and one *bona fide* American seamen, who have lately been impressed by the British in that single port. American vessels and cargoes were constantly condemned in that place, a full account of which must soon be made public. Several masters and supercargoes of condemned vessels came home with Capt. Stewart, who, besides the general usage, was himself treated with personal incivilities and contempt.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

May 4, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

You have heard of the loss of our election in the city of New York. This renders it too probable that the electors of President for this State will be anti-federal. If so, the policy which I was desirous of pursuing at the last election, is now recommended by motives of additional cogency.

To support *Adams* and *Pinckney* equally is the only thing that can possibly save us from the fangs of *Jefferson*.

It is, therefore, essential that the federalists should not separate without coming to a distinct and solemn concert to pursue this course *bona fide*.

Pray attend to this, and let me speedily hear from you that it is done.

SEDGWICK TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 7th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I have this moment received yours of the 4th. I have already detailed to you what was done on Saturday evening. On this subject our friend D. is not perfectly right. I have had a conversation with him this morning. The view he takes of the subject is this. He says, that however those who have an opportunity of personal observation may esteem the character of Mr. Adams, as he is viewed by the great majority of federalists, he is the most popular man in the United States, and deemed best qualified to perform the duties of President; that should an agreement to support, equally, him and General Pinckney, ultimate in the election of the latter, it will be supposed to result from an insidious intention, in a certain description of men, to displace him from the office of President; that this will crumble the federal party to atoms. He says, indeed, that when it shall be reduced to an absolute certainty, that we have no alternative but to pursue this course, or submit to the election of Jefferson, he shall not hesitate to adopt the former. That this crisis exists, is to my mind absolutely certain. He, however, says, that federal electors may be chosen in South Carolina, that Maryland may give us an unanimous vote, and that several electors may be chosen in New-York; and should all these circumstances take place, votes may be thrown away in Massachusetts without endangering the election of Jefferson.

You cannot but perceive the mischievous tendency of these observations from a man of D.'s weight of character. This I expected from ———, but not from him. At any rate, we shall have infinite difficulties to contend with. I did not expect to have them either increased or multiplied from this quarter; and, if possible, he must be reclaimed. Every thing I can do shall be attempted. Are you in such habits as to authorize an address to him on the subject? Of course, he must not know that I have suggested the idea to you.

Marshall has this morning been nominated as Secretary of War. He was never consulted, and had no intimation that McHenry was to retire. He will not accept. I hope Carrington may be brought in. I have, as usual, written this in the house.

I am ever yours, &c.

HAMILTON TO JAY.

New-York, May 7th, 1800.

Dear Sir:

You have been informed of the loss of our election in this city. It is also known that we have been unfortunate throughout Long Island and in Westchester. According to the returns hitherto, it is too probable that we lose our Senators for this district.

The moral certainty therefore is, that there will be an anti-federal majority in the ensuing legislature; and the very high probability is, that this will bring *Jefferson* into the chief magistracy, unless it be prevented by the measure which I shall now submit to your consideration, namely, the immediate calling together of the existing legislature.

I am aware that there are weighty objections to the measure, but the reasons for it appear to me to outweigh the objections; and in times like these in which we live, it will not do to be over-scrupulous. *It is easy to sacrifice the substantial interests of society by a strict adherence to ordinary rules.*

In observing this, I shall not be supposed to mean, that any thing ought to be done which integrity will forbid, but merely that the scruples of delicacy and propriety, as relative to a common course of things, ought to yield to the extraordinary nature of the crisis. They ought not to hinder the taking of a *legal* and *constitutional* step to prevent an atheist in religion, and a fanatic in politics, from getting possession of the helm of state.

You, sir, know in a great degree the anti-federal party; but

I fear you do not know them as well as I do. It is a composition, indeed, of very incongruous materials; but all tending to mischief—some of them, to the OVERTHROW of the GOVERNMENT, by stripping it of its due energies; others of them, to a REVOLUTION, after the manner of BONAPARTE. I speak from indubitable facts, not from conjectures and inferences. In proportion as the true character of the party is understood, is the force of the considerations which urge to every effort to disappoint it; and it seems to me, that there is a very solemn obligation to employ the means in our power.

The calling of the legislature will have for its object the *choosing of electors by the people in districts;* this (as Pennsylvania will do nothing) will insure a majority of votes in the United States for a federal candidate. The measure will not fail to be approved by all the federal party; while it will, no doubt, be condemned by the opposite. As to its intrinsic nature, it is justified by unequivocal reasons of PUBLIC SAFETY.

The reasonable part of the world will, I believe, approve it. They will see it as a proceeding out of the common course, but warranted by the particular nature of the crisis, and the great cause of social order.

If done, the motive ought to be frankly avowed. In your communication to the legislature, they ought to be told that temporary circumstances had rendered it probable that, without their interposition, the executive authority of the general government would be transferred to hands hostile to the system heretofore pursued with so much success, and dangerous to the peace, happiness, and order of the country; that under this impression, from facts convincing to your own mind, you had thought it your duty to give the existing legislature an opportunity of deliberating whether it would not be proper to interpose, and endeavor to prevent so great an evil by referring the choice of electors to the people distributed into districts.

In weighing this suggestion, you will doubtless bear in mind that popular governments must certainly be overturned, and, while they endure, prove engines of mischief, if one party will call to its aid all the resources which vice can give, and if the

other (however pressing the emergency) confines itself within all the ordinary forms of delicacy and decorum.

The legislature can be brought together in three weeks, so that there will be full time for the object; but none ought to be lost.

Think well, my dear sir, of this proposition—appreciate the extreme danger of the crisis; and I am unusually mistaken in my view of the matter, if you do not see it right and expedient to adopt the measure.

Respectfully and affectionately yours, &c.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

May 8th, 1800.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your letter of the 5th instant, which was received yesterday. The measure you mention has been attempted, but without much hope of success.

Yet our friends are to-day in good spirits. The accounts from the northward, apparently authentic, give us the strong hope of still having a majority in our legislature. But, be this as it may, our welfare depends absolutely on a faithful adherence to the plan which has been adopted. New-York, if federal, will not go for Mr. Adams unless there shall be as firm a pledge as the nature of the thing will admit, that Mr. Pinckney will be equally supported in the northern States.

Yours truly,

A. H.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

NEW-YORK, May 10th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I am very sorry for the information contained in your letter of the 7th. But I am not intimate enough with Dexter to put myself upon paper to him.

If on his return I can catch him at New-York, I shall have a particular conversation with him.

He is, I am persuaded, much mistaken as to the opinion entertained of Mr. Adams by the federal party. Were I to determine from my own observation, I should say *most* of the most *influential men* of that party consider him as a very unfit and incapable character.

For my individual part, my mind is made up. I will never more be responsible for him by my direct support, even though the consequence should be the election of *Jefferson.*

If we must have an *enemy* at the head of the government, let it be one whom we can oppose, and for whom we are not responsible, who will not involve our party in the disgrace of his foolish and bad measures. Under *Adams*, as under Jefferson, the government will sink. The party in the hands of whose chief it shall sink, will sink with it; and the advantage will all be on the side of his adversaries.

'Tis a notable expedient for keeping the federal party together, to have at the head of it a man who hates and is despised by those men of it who, in time past, have been its most efficient supporters. If the cause is to be sacrificed to a weak and perverse man, I withdraw from the party, and act upon my own ground, never certainly against my principles, but in pursuance of them my own way. I am mistaken if others will not do the same.

The only way to prevent a fatal schism in the federal party, is to support General Pinckney in good earnest.

If I can be perfectly satisfied that Adams and Pinckney will be upheld in the East with entire good faith, on the ground of

conformity, I will, wherever my influence may extend, pursue the same plan.

If not, I will pursue Mr. Pinckney as my single object. Adieu.

Yours truly, &c.

SEDGWICK TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 18th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

Yours of the 10th I received yesterday. The events in the executive departments you know. Their effects on the federal party are such as you can as well determine by reflection as I could detail. Would to heaven you was here, but it is too late.

There shall be a meeting of such men who remain here, and who can be perfectly confided in; I will inform you of the result. Every tormenting passion rankles in the bosom of that weak and frantic old man, but I have good reason for believing that Pickering and McHenry have been sacrificed as peace offerings. I am at present of opinion, that no decided measures should be taken till I see you.

Very sincerely yours, &c.

M'HENRY TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

WAR DEPARTMENT, 15th May, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I have the honor to communicate to you, that on the 6th instant, I requested of the President of the United States permission to resign the office of Secretary for the Department of War.

To the above request I added a proposition, that my resignation be considered to take place on the 1st of June next, in order

that I might be for a short time in a convenient situation to explain to him or to my successor, any of the measures taken by me as Secretary of War that might require elucidation, and also the inducing motives to some of them, which were best known to myself.

The President answered, "that my requests were reasonable, and readily agreed."

I am making my arrangements for the removal of myself and family to Baltimore, and shall not continue in an official situation longer (if so long) than the 1st of June.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 15, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

Last Saturday morning I received a summons to *resign*, and a desire that I would myself name the day. But I did not incline to accept this insidious favor. The President desired my answer on Monday morning, and I sent it, mentioning that some important matters would render my services *useful* in the office, till about the close of the present quarter; but that "I did not feel it to be my duty to resign." In an hour I received a peremptory discharge, and on Monday evening I quitted the office, after working hard, and completing all the arrangements for the *second census*, pursuant to a law passed in this session.

Mr. G. Morris was to set off this morning for New-York. He will communicate an account of recent occurrences. I am always gratified when there happens a coincidence of my thoughts with yours. I have been contemplating the importance of a bold and frank exposure of Adams; perhaps I may have it in my power to furnish some facts.

When the chief clerk in the office brought me your letter, he told me that Mr. Lee broke it open, the clerk standing by; but Mr. Lee said he had not read it; it was not addressed to me as

Secretary of State. Mr. Lee, when he was going to take charge of the office, voluntarily assured me that private letters to me should not be opened, or if opened inadvertently, that the moment they were discovered to be private, they should not be read, but half a minute was enough to read yours; yet I do not think he would act so dishonorably as to read it, or if any expression struck his eye, I hope he has honor enough to conceal it. I shall direct the postmaster immediately to send letters addressed to me directly to my house.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, July 1st, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I send you the inclosed; if any good use can be made of it you will do it. I have been in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. There is little doubt of federal electors in all; but there is considerable doubt of a perfect union in favor of Pinckney.

The leaders of the first class are generally right, but the leaders of the second class are too much disposed to be wrong. It is essential to inform the most discreet of this description of the facts which denote unfitness in Mr. Adams. I have promised confidential friends a correct statement. To be able to give it I must derive aid from you; and any thing you may write shall be, if you please, returned to you. But you must be exact, and much in detail. The history of the mission to France, from the first steps connected with the declarations in the speech to Congress down to the last proceedings, is very important.

I have serious thoughts of writing to the President to tell him that I have heard of his having repeatedly mentioned the existence of a British faction in this country, and alluded to me as one of that faction, requesting that he will inform me of the truth of this information, and if true, what have been the grounds

of the suggestion. His friends are industrious in propagating the idea to defeat the efforts to unite for Pinckney. The inquiry I propose may furnish an antidote, and vindicate character. What think you of this idea? For my part I can set malice at defiance.

HAMILTON TO CARROLL.

NEW-YORK, July 1st, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I yesterday returned from an excursion through three of the four eastern States, and found your letter of the 18th of April. It is very necessary that the true and independent friends of the government should communicate and understand each other at the present very embarrassed and dangerous crisis of public affairs. I am glad, therefore, of the opportunity which your letter affords me of giving you some explanations which may be useful. They are given without reserve, because the times forbid temporising, and I hold no opinions which I have any motives to dissemble. As to the situation of this State, with regard to the election of President, it is perfectly ascertained that on a joint ballot of the two houses of our legislature, the opposers of the government will have a majority of more than twenty; a majority which can by no means be overcome. Consequently all our electors will vote for Mr. Jefferson, and Mr. Burr. I think there is little cause to doubt that the electors in the four eastern States will all be federal.

The only question seems to be as to Rhode Island, where there is some division, and a state of things rather loose. Governor Fenner, as far as he may dare, will promote the interest of Jefferson.

A considerable diversion in favor of the opposition has lately been made in New Jersey. But the best and best informed men there entertain no doubt that all her electors will still be federal, and I believe this opinion may be relied upon.

I go no further south, as I take it for granted your means of calculation with regard to that quarter are, at least, equal to mine.

The result of a comprehensive view of the subject, seems to me to be, that the event is uncertain, but that the probability is, that a universal adherence of the federalists to Pinckney will exclude Jefferson.

On this point there is some danger, though the greatest number of strong minded men in New England are not only satisfied of the expediency of supporting *Pinckney*, as giving the best chance against Jefferson, but even prefer him to *Adams;* yet, in the body of that people there is a strong personal attachment to this gentleman, and most of the leaders of the second class are so anxious for his re-election that it will be difficult to convince them that there is as much danger of its failure as there unquestionably is, or to induce them faithfully to co-operate in Mr. Pinckney, notwithstanding their common and strong dread of Jefferson.

It may become advisable, in order to oppose their fears to their *prejudices*, for the middle States to declare that Mr. Adams will not be supported at all, when, seeing his success desperate, they would be driven to adhere to *Pinckney*. In this plan New Jersey, and even Connecticut, may be brought to concur. For both these States have generally lost confidence in Mr. Adams.

But this will be best decided by future events and elucidations. In the mean time it is not advisable that Maryland should be too deeply pledged to the support of Mr. Adams.

That this gentleman ought not to be the object of the federal wish, is, with me, reduced to demonstration. His administration has already very materially disgraced and sunk the government. There are defects in his character which must inevitably continue to do this more and more. And if he is supported by the federal party, his party must in the issue fall with him. Every other calculation will, in my judgment, prove illusory.

Doctor *Franklin*, a sagacious observer of human nature, drew this portrait of Mr. Adams:—"He is always honest, *sometimes* great, but *often mad*." I subscribe to the justness of this picture, adding as to the first trait of it this qualification—"as far as a

man excessively *vain* and *jealous*, and *ignobly* attached *to place* can be."

With great consideration and esteem,

I am, dear Sir, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

WASHINGTON, July 7, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I have before me your favor of the 1st instant. I have some knowledge of the circumstance referred to in General Schuyler's letter. It is a fact that Mr. Shoemaker has either seen such a letter from Mr. Jefferson as is described, or received such evidence that a letter of the kind existed, as made a strong impression on his mind. It has, I know, been proposed to make application to Mr. Smith for the letter, but I presume the idea has not been pursued. Mr. Rawle can, I believe, inform what Mr. Shoemaker can say.

I will readily furnish the statement you desire, from a firm conviction, that the affairs of this government will not only be ruined, but that the disgrace will attach to the federal party, if they permit the re-election of Mr. Adams. I am, however, as yet unsettled, and must previously arrange my papers and dispose of some urgent official business.

It is necessary to give a proper direction to the newspapers, which are at present filled with the most disgusting nonsense. The cause of the federalists has declined; their system has been reversed, honest men have been calumniated and discredited, and no apology or explanation has been offered to the public.

It will be extraordinary, if these strange things are permitted to be slurred over, by attributing them to *State necessity*, the firmness of the President, his independence of both parties, &c., &c. A few paragraphs, exposing the folly of such publications, will

produce an admirable effect: they will produce replies, which will gradually and very naturally lead to the public discussion which has become *inevitable.*

I approve entirely of your writing to the President for an explanation of what he means by the frequent allusions to a British party or faction. Indeed every thing which decorum will permit, to render the present state of our affairs intelligible, is, in my opinion, proper.

Nothing is more disgusting to me, than the praise bestowed upon the President, for his *wise* and *sincere pursuit of peace*, according to the example of *General Washington.* A great number of public men have heard the President declare, that he did not believe that the French government was *sincere* in making what are called the *overtures* upon which the last mission was founded. Nay, more, the President has declared that a treaty was neither to be *expected* nor *desired.* While Mr. Ellsworth and Mr. Davis were at Trenton last autumn, and after the instructions had received the President's sanction, he said that the expulsion of the envoys from France with circumstances of personal indignity, would be favorable to the interests of the United States.

I shall ever believe that the last mission to France was by the President considered as a *game of diplomacy*, and that it was his intention to gain popularity at home, by appearing to be desirous of peace, while he exhibited his talents as a great statesman, by outwitting the French in negotiation. The *wisdom* and *cordiality*, of which Mr. Thomas speaks in his circular letter, was in fact nothing but a sort of *diplomatic skill*, of which the President justly accuses his Secretaries of being unacquainted. You may rely upon my co-operation in every reasonable measure for effecting the election of General Pinckney. Mr. Carroll, of this State, is, I believe, right; but I wish you to write to him as soon as possible.

HAMILTON TO ADAMS.

NEW-YORK, August 1, 1800.

SIR:

It has been repeatedly mentioned to me that you have on different occasions asserted the existence of a British faction in this country, embracing a number of leading or influential characters of the federal party, as usually denominated; and that you have sometimes named me, at others plainly alluded to me, as one of this description of persons. And I have likewise been assured, that, of late, some of your warm adherents, for electioneering purposes, have employed a corresponding lan guage. I must, sir, take it for granted that you cannot have made such assertions or insinuations without being willing to avow them, and to assign the reasons to a party who may conceive himself injured by them. I therefore trust that you will not deem it improper, that I apply directly to yourself, to ascertain from you, in reference to your own declarations, whether the information I have received is correct or not; and if correct, what are the grounds upon which you have founded the suggestion.

JOHN ADAMS, Esq., President of the United States.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, August 8d, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I have, two days since, written to Mr. Adams a *respectful* letter on the subject I heretofore mentioned to you. Occupation at court prevented its being done sooner.

But I wait with impatience for the statement of facts which you promised me. It is plain that, unless we give our reasons in some form or other, Mr. Adams's personal friends, seconded by

the Jacobins, will completely *run us down in the public opinion.* Your name, in company with mine, that of T. Pickering, &c., is in full circulation, as one of the *British faction* of which Mr. Adams has talked so much.

I have serious thoughts of giving to the public my opinion respecting Mr. Adams, with my reasons, in a letter to a friend, with my signature. This seems to me the most authentic way of conveying the information, and best suited to the plain dealing of my character. There are, however, reasons against it; and a very strong one is, that some of the principal causes of my disapprobation proceed from yourself, and other members of the administration, who would be understood to be the sources of my information, whatever cover I might give the thing.

What say you to this measure? I could predicate it on the fact that I am abused by the friends of Mr. Adams, who ascribe my opposition to pique and disappointment; and could give it the shape of a *defence of myself.*

You have doubtless seen the Aurora publication of Treasury documents, and the manner in which my name is connected with it. These publications do harm with the ignorant, who are the greatest number. I have thoughts of instituting an action of slander, to be tried by a struck jury, against the editor. If I do it, I should claim you and the supervisors, collectors, and loan officers of all the States, from Maryland to New York, inclusively, as witnesses, to demonstrate completely the malice and falsity of the accusation. What think you of this? You see I am in a very belligerent humor.

But I remember that, at the outset, before the sums payable for interest, pensions, &c., were ascertained, I placed the money in the hands of the paying officers, upon estimate, and that, to avoid disappointment, I made the estimates large. Pray look into this, and see how far it may give any color to the calumny.

Let me hear from you soon.

HAMILTON TO BAYARD.

NEW-YORK, August 6th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

The president of Columbia College, in this city, has resigned, and we are looking out for a successor. Dr. Wharton has occurred to me as a character worthy of inquiry; and the great confidence I feel in your judgment and candor, induces me to have recourse to you.

We are extremely anxious to have a well-qualified man, as this is the only thing wanted to render our institution very flourishing. We have two very good professors—one of the languages, the other of the mathematics and natural philosophy; and we have a professor of chemistry—this branch having been lately made a part of the academic course—together with better funds, as I believe, than any similar institution in the United States. I mention these particulars to impress you with the importance of our college to the cause of literature, and with the duty which thence results of peculiar circumspection and care in the choice of a president. It is essential that he be a gentleman in his manners, as well as a sound and polite scholar; that his moral character be irreproachable; that he possess energy of body and mind; and be of a disposition to maintain discipline without *undue austerity;* and, in the last place, that his politics be of the right sort. I beg you to inform me particularly how far Dr. Wharton meets this description, in what, if any thing, he fails. You will, of course, see the propriety of mentioning nothing about this inquiry. In the present eventful crisis of our affairs, a mutual communication of informations and opinions among influential men of the federal party, may be attended with some advantage to their cause. Under this impression I shall give you a summary of the state of things north of the Delaware; south of it, your information is likely to be as good as mine; and, accordingly, I shall request your view of what is to be expected from that quarter. In New Hampshire there is no doubt of federal electors; but there is a decided partiality for

Mr. Adams. I took pains to possess Governor Gilman, whose influence is very preponderating, of the errors and defects of Mr. Adams, and of the danger that no candidate can prevail, by mere federal strength; consequently of the expediency and necessity of unanimously voting for Gen. Pinckney (who, in the south, may get some anti-federal votes) as the best chance of excluding Mr. Jefferson. The Governor appeared convinced of the soundness of these views, and cautiously gave me to expect his co-operation. Yet I do not count upon New Hampshire for more than two things—one an unanimous vote for Mr. Adams; the other, no vote for any anti-federalist. In Massachusetts, almost all the leaders of the first class are dissatisfied with Mr. Adams, and enter heartily into the policy of supporting General Pinckney. But most of the leaders of the second class are attached to Mr. Adams, and fearful of jeopardizing his election by promoting that of General Pinckney; and the mass of the people are well affected to him and to his administration. Yet I have strong hopes that, by the exertions of the principal federalists, Massachusetts will unanimously vote for Adams and Pinckney. Rhode Island is in a state somewhat uncertain. Schisms have grown up from personal rivalships, which have been improved by the anti-federalists, to strengthen their interests. Governor Fenner expresses a hope that there will be two anti-federal electors; but our friends reject this idea as wholly improbable. But I am not quite convinced that they know the ground. In every event, however, I expect that Mr. Adams will have there an unanimous vote.

I think nothing can be relied upon as to General Pinckney. Connecticut will, I doubt not, unanimously vote for General Pinckney; but, being very much displeased with Mr. Adams, it will require the explicit advice of certain gentlemen to induce them to vote for him. No anti-federalist has any chance there. About Vermont, I am not as yet accurately informed, but I believe *Adams* and *Pinckney* will both have all the votes. In New-York all the votes will certainly be for Jefferson and Burr. New Jersey does not stand as well as she used to do. The antis hope for the votes of this State, but I think they will be disap-

pointed. If the electors are federal, Pinckney will certainly be voted for; and Adams will be or not, as leading friends shall advise. Adding to this view of the northern, what I have understood of the southern quarter, our prospects are not brilliant. There seems to be too much probability that Jefferson or Burr will be President. The latter is intriguing with all his might in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont; and there is a possibility of some success in his intrigues. He counts positively on the universal support of the anti-federalists; and that, by some adventitious aid from other quarters, he will overtop his friend Jefferson. Admitting the first point, the conclusion may be realized, and, if it is so, Burr will certainly attempt to reform the government *à la Buonaparte*. He is as unprincipled and dangerous a man as any country can boast—as true a Catiline as ever met in midnight conclave.

With sincere esteem and regard, &c.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

Brooklyn, August 10th, 1800.

My Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 1st did not reach me until last evening; the inclosure shall be transmitted to-morrow or the day following, by some trusty person who will attend the levee, if one can be found who will engage to deliver it; otherwise I may perhaps send it in the regular package which goes from the post-office. This method would be better than to send a servant, who might be obliged to deliver it to another servant. There is no reason to doubt the first course will be pursued, and I shall not delay to inform you of the delivery as soon as it is ascertained.

Although I cannot but feel unhappy at the gloomy prospect of our public affairs, yet I do not feel my usual degree of solicitude for the issue of the election. There is *something like* a balance of advantages and disadvantages in the success of either of

the three candidates. Mr. Adams will doubtless continue to sacrifice the independent federalists so long as he finds victims who will be acceptable to those whose favor he courts; he will also hazard a war with Great Britain, which he evidently thinks would be no injury *to him;* but if he has justly forfeited the confidence of the country, he has not yet actually lost it in this quarter; and the men who adhere to him, while they zealously sustain him, are also a restraint upon him, and for some time at least may prevent his worst measures, and until they have given him up will not cordially support another. Jefferson's election would tend to reunite the federal party, and if it is evidently effected by the Jacobin force unaided by any other, or if aided at all by the adherents of Mr. Adams, the reunion of our old friends would be complete. Should Mr. Pinckney be elected he would be opposed by Mr. Adams and his warm adherents, and would be heartily supported by those only who are now detached from Mr. Adams. This state of things would be unpropitious to Mr. Pinckney's administration; there is, however, one unanswerable reason for wishing Mr. Pinckney to succeeed, and that is, that the best and indeed all the truly good men would find themselves in their proper places, arranged under the banners of the Constitution and laws on the side of the national chief.

The question has been asked whether if the federalists cannot carry their first points, they would not do well to turn the election from Jefferson to Burr? They conceive Burr to be less likely to look to France for support than Jefferson, provided he could be supported at home. They consider Burr as actuated by ordinary ambition, Jefferson by that and the pride of the Jacobinic philosophy. The former may be satisfied by power and property, the latter must see the roots of our society pulled up and a new course of cultivation substituted; certainly it would have been fortunate for the United States, if the second canditade on the Jacobin side had been one who might be safely trusted. No great progress has been made in convincing people of the propriety of voting for Pinckney *with all our strength;* yet I believe if it shall appear clearly that Adams will fail, and that Pinckney *may* be elected, our legislature will act properly, espe-

cially if there is no just imputation of unfairness against Mr. Pinckney's friends.

I am told New Hampshire will vote for Adams and Pinckney, but that Rhode Island will sooner give some second votes for Jefferson than all for Pinckney.

I am, with unceasing esteem and attachment,

Your faithful friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

BAYARD TO HAMILTON.

August 18, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I willingly communicate such information as I possess on the subject of the inquiries contained in the letter you did me the honor to write on the 6th instant, and which I received the day before yesterday. I had a ten years' acquaintance with Dr. Wharton, which invariably continued on a footing of intimacy and friendship. His classical knowledge is extensive and critical; and he has taught with much reputation, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Astronomy. He is a master in Ethics, and acquainted with politics as a branch of Moral Philosophy. He is a man of mild and amiable temper, of polite manners, and of principles equally sound in practice as in theory, in morals and in politics. With these qualities there is a great desideratum in the character necessary to direct the education of youth. The cloisters of St. Omar's were extremely unfriendly to a just knowledge of human nature. They afforded leisure to study books, but not the means of becoming acquainted with men. It was probably too late, when the doctor came into life, to give a turn to his mind which was entirely new. He contented himself with pursuing the knowledge which could be acquired from books, and did not or could not qualify himself to judge of men. In applying his censure or applause, I often thought him intemperate and injudicious, as to that knowledge which would enable

the president of a college to discriminate the dispositions and talents of his pupils, and attribute their actions to the proper motives, to know when and how praise ought to be bestowed, and censure applied in order to produce a certain effect; in short, as to that skill which instructs us as to the keys of human action, I consider the doctor as greatly deficient. In other respects, he wants nothing of the character you describe. Such is the view, certainly imperfect, which I have always had of the character of Dr. Wharton,—a view not shaded by an unfriendly sentiment; nor do I believe colored by the sincere esteem and friendship I have for him. He does not possess that imposing manner which belongs to the deportment of some men, and which, if not essential, is at least a useful quality in those who have much intercourse with young men, who are to be restrained as much by personal respect as severity of discipline. There is an occasional levity about the doctor, which is little short of trifling. What is meant by gravity he has nothing of. The serious affairs of life he certainly can perform seriously, but not with that solemnity and impression which belongs to the manners of many persons. I offer you a very imperfect sketch of the doctor's character. You will allow it no weight, but as corroborative of the opinions of others.

I thank you for the view you have given me of the state of things to the eastward, relative to the election of President. I value it, because I can rely upon it. It is in my power to repeat what you know as to our situation in the southward; but I do not presume I can add to your information. The condition of Pennsylvania is known to you. Every thing I take to depend upon the ensuing election of the State legislature. The federal majority is not so great in the Senate as to be beyond the operation of this election. The event, however, is not much dreaded. If the present state of things continues, the federalists would consent to district the State, so as to give to Jefferson eight votes. Delaware is safe. They may hesitate whether they will give Mr. Adams a vote. The present electoral law of Maryland is by districts. Such an election would probably give Mr. Jefferson three votes. It is the better opinion, however, that the

federalists will avail themselves of the power they possess, to command the entire vote of the State. Virginia is sold, and past salvation; my knowledge of North Carolina was derived during the session of Congress from the members of that State. I consulted the most of them on the federal side, and set down the votes of the State, seven for Jefferson, and five for Adams and Pinckney, the five perhaps less certainly for the latter than the former. It is thought that the votes of South Carolina will count equally for Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Pinckney; Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, may be thrown into the scale of Mr. Jefferson. But there is no reason to despond, unless the eastern States play a foul game; and if they do so a second time, they ought never to be forgiven. If they do, they forfeit for ever the confidence of their friends to the southward. They will beget a system of miserable intrigue between the members of the same party, whose efforts can never be united, but through mutual confidence; and whose united efforts are absolutely necessary to maintain their ground against their enemies.

What is the charm which attaches the east so much to Mr. A.? It can be nothing personal. The escape we have had under his administration is miraculous. He is liable to gusts of passion little short of frenzy, which drive him beyond the control of any rational reflection. I speak of what I have seen. At such moments the interests of those who support him or the interest of the nation would be outweighed by a single impulse of rage. This is enough, but not all. We may thank the guardian genius of the country which has watched over its destinies for the last four years. I do not hold this language to the multitude, though I should have no objection to hold it to Mr. A. himself. We must vote for him, I suppose, and therefore cannot safely say to every one what we think of him. But he has palsied the sinews of the party, and, if I relied on forebodings as ominous, I should believe that before another Presidential cycle has completed itself, he would give it its death wound. I hope my sentiments do not scandalize the faith or works of good federalists. I can see no in any thing which can happen, but am not indifferent to the dangers or evils which threaten the country.

You have the reputation of being our father confessor in politics; and I have therefore made to you a frank confession. My sins, I hope, will be remitted.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

Brookline, August 21, 1800.

My Dear Sir:

An exposition of the reasons which influence many men of unquestionable patriotism and loyalty to withhold from Mr. Adams the confidence he once enjoyed, may be useful by satisfying the intelligent and candid part of the public that these men act, as they have ever done, on genuine national principles; the reasons are strong and require only to be placed in a clear light; but this must be done with infinite care and circumspection, that neither danger nor *jealousy* may be excited. It must be done in a manner that shall clear up the doubts, which now exist, of the sincerity and consistency of the party who promote the *union of votes* for Adams and Pinckney.

It is perceived by Mr. Adams's personal friends that while the party profess a zealous desire to unite *all* the federal votes for A. and P., there are many, or at least some individuals among those who compose it, whose *wishes* are known to be that the election may issue in favor of Mr. P., and therefore it is inferred such persons will not act, and do not aim as they profess. To this charge it is generally answered, "that without a union of all the federalists, neither Mr. A. nor Mr. P. can probably be chosen, but that with such an union one may probably be President, and the other Vice-President; and, considering all the circumstances of the case, the chance and the *preponderance of wishes* is in favor of Mr. A."—that although there may be many, and doubtless are some individuals, who would think it by no means propitious to the national welfare that Mr. Adams should be re-elected, yet they yield to the superior consideration of *union*, by which alone Jefferson can be kept out, and Adams or

Pinckney put into the office, and therefore these men act and will act fairly towards Mr. Adams, giving him all their support *upon the just expectation* of a similar support to Mr. P., from those who prefer Mr. Adams; "that the plan formed at Philadelphia to support both, was a compromise which contemplated Mr. Adams as President; but *liable, however, to be superseded by Pinckney* from the nature of the election, and "that good faith would and ought to be observed as the only means of success, and as *the only ground of content after success.*"

Such is the tenor of our language to the public—we think it true, and we shall be greatly embarrassed if at this late period, after our sentiments are extensively known, there should be a new or different ground taken—you must allow me therefore to *insist*, that whatever display is made of Mr. Adams's misconduct, *it must be continually recollected that he may be again chosen by us*, and that we are pledged to give him the *full chance of the united vote concerted at Philadelphia;* so that, whatever is said against him, must be explicitly avowed to be the complaint of those of us who have yielded individual opinion to the general opinion of the party as a matter of expediency, and not the language of the party; and it ought to be admitted, that the party, from *various* considerations, rather prefer the election of Mr. Adams than Mr. Pinckney. I understand, through a friend, that the Carolinians adhere to these ideas as they were digested and agreed to at Philadelphia.

Mr. Harper writes from Baltimore on the 11th inst., "that our friends may now count with some certainty, indeed very great certainty, on an unanimous vote for Mr. Pinckney in Maryland." Although I think some good may be derived from an exhibition of Mr. Adams's misconduct, yet I am well persuaded that you may do better than to put your name to it. This might give it an interest with men who need no such interest, but it will be converted to a new proof that you are a *dangerous man.* Ames and I agree that you will give the enemy an advantage to which he has no claim.

In every situation believe me affectionately and faithfully yours,

GEORGE CABOT.

MARSHALL TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, August 23d, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I received to-day your letter of the 19th inst., accompanying a memorial from the Governor-General of the Danish West India Islands, respecting the conduct of some of our ships of war.

This paper shall be immediately communicated to the Secretary of the Navy. Our dispatches from Paris come no later than the 17th of May. There is nothing in them on which a positive opinion respecting the result of that negotiation can be formed.

Connecting the then state of things with the European events which have since happened, and with intelligence from America which has since reached them, I shall not be surprised if the paragraph from St. Sebastian should be true.

With very much respect and esteem, &c.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

BROOKLINE, August 23d, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have shown to several of our wisest and best men a copy of what I wrote you on the 21st instant. They all concur in the sentiments it contains. Still it is probably fit, and it may be indispensable, to expose Mr. Adams fully to the public. The countenance and authority given by him and his friends to the vile calumnies against us, may strengthen their credit so much as to render them irrefutable without such an exposition. *I don't think, however, we can discard Mr. Adams as a candidate at this late period without total derangement and defeat in this quarter.* It is true there is an apparent absurdity in supporting a man whom we know to be unworthy of trust. It is a dilemma, however, into which we are brought by the proceedings at Philadelphia, and

which we could not shun—or perhaps it is a natural result of the mode of election, and could not have been avoided; but, be this as it may, we have considered, as an agreed point among the federalists, that Adams and Pinckney are to be voted for together, and we accordingly have urged, with great confidence, that *this is the intention of the federal party generally*, and that it is acquiesced in by most of those who are supposed to influence them. I think, therefore, you cannot omit to make a clear and explicit reference to this known state of things in whatever you may publish, and possibly, as a consequence of it, to ground the publication chiefly on the necessity of it to exculpate those whom it vindicates from the abominable charges, insinuations, and unmerited denunciations of Mr. Adams, and some of his personal friends. Indeed, I see no impropriety in regretting that a compromise has been made, which must be observed at every hazard, it being too manifest that Mr. Adams has relinquished the system he was chosen by the federalists to support, and that he has become hostile, and will necessarily become more and more hostile, to the firm advocates of that system, and all who adhere to it. I think, however, it must be shown that the opposition to Mr. Adams is founded upon broad public principles. For myself, I often declare that the mission to France, though impolitic, unjustifiable, dangerous and inconsistent; the expulsion of *able, upright and faithful* officers—since Mr. Pickering was expelled the President has said of him to a gentleman, "an honest man as ever lived"—though a ruinous precedent; the pardon of Fries though a sacrifice of the safety as well as dignity of the State; that many other transactions of inferior magnitude though shamefully wrong; yet that all these would not induce me to oppose the President's re-election, if I did not view them as evidence, explained and confirmed by other evidence, that he has abandoned the system he was chosen to maintain, and that he is likely to introduce its opposite, with all its pernicious consequences, as fast as he can, and as far as his influence will go.

If this idea is correct, as it appears to me, it cannot be too strongly impressed on the sound part of the public. A long

letter full of good sense and interesting information is just received from Mr. W.; he thinks an examination of P. Adams's administration has been so long delayed that it can only now be made to grow out of the unjust accusations of his present friends. This excellent letter has been read and admired by several persons whose judgment you respect, but whose opinions remain perfectly fixed, that we cannot now change the arrangement. We are not strong enough to break up and new form in the face of our enemy. I have sent to Mr. W. a copy of mine to you of the 21st, which will explain to him sufficiently *our* situation. Mr. Gordon tells me the New Hampshire electors will all vote for Adams and Pinckney certainly, except one, of whom the same is probable, but not certain. The persons for electors are supposed to be *predestinated* by the legislature.

Colonel Burr is to be at Providence to-day—he probably may expect that as Governor Fenner will vote for Jefferson, he may also be induced to vote for him; as he is a very sanguine man, he may expect even more.

Yours faithfully, &c.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, Monday, 25th August, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I was this moment favored with yours of the 19th instant, requesting copies of the Instruction, and of the letter mentioned in it. I shall, without delay, look for these papers. I presume that I have preserved them, but am not certain. When I removed from my house in the Broadway to the Government House, all such of my papers as were not in use, or which did not respect property, were packed up with little order; nor have they been since separated or arranged—nor, indeed, unpacked.

As to the letter, all the papers respecting the mission to Great Britain were kept together, until I removed to this place, when they were packed up also, with many others not in use,

and so still remain. That I have preserved the letter is probable, but not certain; for I usually destroy those private letters which either ought not or which do not appear of sufficient importance to be kept. My recollection of its contents is imperfect, but corresponds with the general idea you give of it. As to the use I made of it, that was communicated to you in confidence, and, consequently, cannot be given to the public. If I find it, as I hope may be the case, you shall certainly have a copy of it.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN JAY.

AMES TO HAMILTON.

DEDHAM, Aug. 26th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I have communicated your letter, by Mr. Coolidge to Mr. Cabot and two or three friends. I have desired him, and he has promised, to write to you on the subject. Since its reception I have had a long, profoundly sensible, and interesting letter from Mr. Wolcott. The same friends have also considered that, and we all agree in the result.

We understand that at the close of the late session the federalists consulted on the measures proper to be taken by the friends of order and true liberty to keep the chair from being occupied by an enemy of both. This was the principal object to which all inferior considerations must be made to yield. It was known, and allowed, that Mr. Adams has conducted strangely and unaccountably, and that his re-election will be very inauspicious to the United States. But great as that evil appeared, it was thought indispensably necessary to run the risk of it, and to agree fairly to vote for him and General Pinckney,—because chance might exclude the former—and because any other arrangement would, by dividing the party, inevitably exclude *both*, and absolutely secure the success of Mr. Jefferson—and

because, also, many, perhaps most of the federalists, will believe it is better to have him (Mr. Adams) again, than Mr. Jefferson. The question being not what opinion we must have of the candidates, but what conduct we are to pursue, I do not see cause to arraign the policy of the result of that meeting.

For, in the first place, it is manifestly impossible to get votes enough for General Pinckney to prevent the choice of Mr. Jefferson, in case he should be supported in open hostility to Mr. Adams. The sixteen votes of this State, and four of Rhode Island, may be counted as adhering, in all events, to Mr. Adams. Then why should we ground any plan of conduct on a known impracticability of its execution? By taking that course of open hostility, generous as it may seem, we are at issue with all the federalists who would not join us, and whose vexation and despair would ascribe the certain ill success of the party to us and not to the Jacobins. They would say we make Mr. Jefferson President, and the vindictive friends of Mr. Adams would join in the accusation. The federalists would be defeated, which is bad, and disjointed and enraged against one another, which would be worse. Now it seems to me that the great object of duty and prudence is to keep the party strong by its union and spirit; for I see almost no chance of preventing the election of Mr. Jefferson. Pennsylvania will be managed eventually by Governor McKean and Governor Dallas, to throw its whole weight into that scale. The question is not, I fear, how we shall fight, but how we and all federalists shall fall—that we may fall like Antæus, the stronger for our fall.

It is, I confess, awkward and embarrassing to act under the constraints that we do. But sincerity will do much to extricate us. Where is the inconsistency of saying, President Adams has not our approbation of some of his measures, nor do we desire his re-election, but many federalists do, and the only chance to prevent the triumph of the Jacobins, is to unite and vote according to the compromise made at Philadelphia for the *two* candidates. That this gives an equal chance and a better than we would freely give to one of them. But strong as our objections are, and strongly as we would and are willing to urge them to

the public, we refrain because the effect of urging them would be to split the federalists, and absolutely to insure Mr. Jefferson's success. That, however, if the ravenous and absurd attacks of Mr. Adams's personal friends, and the meditated intrigues with our legislature, should make it necessary, we shall not fail to prevent the effect of that *compromise* which they thus abuse and turn against the avowed design of those who made it; and that we shall not sit still, but resort to such measures as they will render necessary. That this compromise not only exhibits the condescension and pliancy of Mr. Adams's opposers, but is the only good basis of the success of either Mr. Adams's or General Pinckney's friends in the event, as it engages beforehand for the acquiescence of the disappointed part of the federalists, and also as it is the only step that can unite them to oppose the election of a Jacobin, and, in that sad event, that can keep them united as a party, without whose union oppression and revolution will ensue.

Where is the absurdity or inconsistency of this language? It is, besides, that which we have held for some time, and it is difficult now to change it.

I am therefore clear, that *you* ought not with your name, nor if practicable in any way, that will be traced to *you*, to execute your purpose of exposing the reasons for a change of the Executive. But a strong appeal to the sense and principles of the real federalists would not or need not contradict or discredit the language above stated. I have tried to compress as much as I can into one sheet, but I have much more I wish to suggest to you. I have no occasion to say how highly I respect your judgment, but I exceedingly desire to discuss with you the point of changes which the Jacobins may force the nation to make in the plan of the government.

Yours truly,

FISHER AMES.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, August 26th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

Yesterday I received and answered yours of the 19th instant. I have found a COPY of the instructions made by William T. Franklin, who was our secretary. They contain the following, VERBATIM, viz.: "You are to make the most candid and confidential communications upon all subjects to the ministers of our generous ally, the King of France; to undertake nothing in the negotiation for peace or truce, without their knowledge or concurrence; and ultimately to govern yourselves by their advice and opinion."

I have not yet found the letter.

Yours,

JOHN JAY.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, August 27th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I received and answered your letter of the 19th inst. on Monday. Yesterday I found the instructions, and immediately wrote to you a letter containing a copy of the paragraph in question. My search for the letter of which I made the use you mention, was fruitless until this morning, when I found it, and now inclose a copy. It does not quite answer your expectation as to the opinion, but I know, and am ready to certify, that you gave me in substance the opinion you mention, viz.: "That unless an arrangement on solid terms could be made with Great Britain, it would be better to do nothing."

Yours,

JOHN JAY.

CARROLL TO HAMILTON.

BROOKLANDWOOD, near BALTIMORE, Aug. 27th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I received this morning, at this place, the country residence of my son-in-law, Mr. Caton, your letter of the 7th instant. I wish it were in my power to give you pleasing intelligence of the politics in this State. Our county (Ann Arundel), which was lately so federal, is at present much divided in the upper part of it. I suspect there is a majority for anti-federal candidates to our State legislature. This change of sentiment has been principally effected by a few characters, who, profiting by the report that our legislature would take from the people the right of choosing the electors of President and Vice-President, have infused such jealousies into the minds of the people, that I fear the federal ticket will not prevail in Ann Arundel, unless the candidates will promise not to take from the people the choice of electors.

Notwithstanding the arts, and lies, and indefatigable industry of the Jacobins in this State, I am of opinion a great majority of its inhabitants are friendly to the federal government and its measures. I suspect Jefferson and Burr will have three votes in this State, and that the electors will be chosen by districts, and not by the legislature. The federal electors will vote for Adams and Pinckney, although the former has lost the confidence of many of the federals from the incidents to which you allude, and which are pretty generally circulated through this State.

It is the character of the age to be timid and suspicious; and this infirmity, so natural to men of my time of life, has no doubt its influence on my mind. I much fear that this country is doomed to great convulsions, changes, and calamities. The turbulent and disorganizing spirit of Jacobinism, under the worn-out disguise of equal liberty and right, and equal division of property, held out to the indolent and needy, but not really intended to be executed, will introduce anarchy, which will terminate here, as in France, in a military despotism.

I understand Jefferson and Burr have all the votes in Vir-

ginia. How the votes will be to the southward of that State, I can form no opinion, having no sure data to form one. If the Virginia electors should suspect that Burr might outvote their favorite, Jefferson, they will leave out Burr, or only leave him a few votes.

I hope the eastern electors, in a case of so much importance, and when they come to consider the baneful effects which may result from their giving a chance to the election of Jefferson or Burr for President, will vote unanimously for Adams and Pinckney; if they do not act in this manner, it is highly probable that Jefferson will be elected President.

Although I dislike laws and changes suited to the spur of the occasion, yet, as I see many evils are likely to result from the choice of a Jacobinical President, the insidious policy of Virginia should, in my opinion, be counteracted; and if we should have a federal House of Delegates, (of which I really have doubts from the present ferment in public minds,) I hope the legislature will choose "pro hac vice," the electors of President and Vice-President. I say I HOPE, for I am not certain, even if the new House of Delegates should be federal, that they would pass such a law, as many of the members will probably be instructed not to vote for it.

I have given you my sentiments upon the subject of your letter and all the information I possess, which, to speak the truth, is chiefly derived from others, and those well disposed to our present government.

Burr will probably act with more decision than Jefferson, if elected President, and will go on better with his party, but will not Jefferson be afraid to disoblige his party, and may he not be driven to measures which his own judgment would reject.

A wise and federal Senate may, for a considerable time restrain the wild projects of the Jacobin faction, and in politics as in war, who gains time, I will not say, with the great Frederick, *gains every thing,* but gains a *great deal.*

If the war in Europe should be protracted to another year, I fear the anti-federal party will endeavor to precipitate this country into a war with England, and the depredations committed

by her cruisers on our trade will aid their designs. I hope, however, the coming winter will produce a general peace. In that event we shall have one evil the less to dread from the machinations of the enemies of order and good government.

It is much to be wished that our envoys to France may be able to accommodate our differences with that nation, before peace is concluded between it and England, otherwise Buonaparte will, I fear, make us purchase the forbearance of the great nation at a very dear rate.

I am with sentiments of high esteem
and respect, dear Sir,
Your most humble servant,
CHARLES CARROLL of Carrollton.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, 22d September, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

On my return to this place on Friday last, I was favored with yours of the 3d instant.

It seems, that contradictory reports still prevail respecting our negotiations at Paris. I am not yet persuaded that Buonaparte has adopted, in all its extent, the system of domination which the preceding rulers of France attempted to execute; and therefore, I presume that a treaty of peace with America on fair and just terms may comport with his views. A treaty of peace on any other than fair and just terms is not desirable; and in my opinion, that nation must be deficient in Spirit, Power, or Wisdom, that will accept of peace on any other. These ideas, however, are not new to you—for I well remember your opinion, relative to settling our then existing differences with Great Britain, that "*unless an arrangement on solid terms could be made with Great Britain, it would be better to do nothing.*"

With great esteem and regard, I am dear Sir, &c.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, October 1st, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your favor of September 26th, and have made a few notes which I will revise and send to you to-morrow. The style and temper is excellent; no observations occur to me upon the first part of the draft.

You will judge of the expediency of sending the letter from the information which you possess of the public opinion. I have no lights beyond those which I suggested as from Massachusetts, in a late letter which I wrote to you, and which I hope you received. The advice from that quarter was opposed to any publication with your signature. I am of opinion, with you, that anonymous publications do no good.

Presuming that you would want the draft, I inclose it. I will write more at large to-morrow. Yours, &c.

P. S. I inclose a S. C. paper—there is in it a publication not much to my mind. Mr. P. ought not to have suggested a doubt of the authenticity of the letter to Tench Coxe.

HAMILTON TO ADAMS.

NEW-YORK, October 1, 1800.

SIR:

The time which has elapsed since my letter of the 1st Aug. was delivered to you, precludes the further expectation of an answer.

From this silence I will draw no inference, nor will I presume to judge of the fitness of silence on such an occasion, on the part of the chief magistrate of a republic towards a citizen who without a stain has discharged so many important public trusts.

But thus much I will affirm, that by whomsoever a charge of

the kind mentioned in my former letter may at any time have been made, or insinuated against me, it is a base, wicked, and cruel calumny, destitute even of a plausible pretext to excuse the folly or the depravity which must have dictated it.

With due respect,
I have the honor to be Sir,
Your obedient servant.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

WASHINGTON, October 2, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote you a hasty letter yesterday, in which I returned the draft which accompanied your favor of September 26th. In my opinion, the style, temper, and spirit of the composition, are well suited to the subject, and will do you honor. I have only to submit a few criticisms to your consideration.

The observations respecting Mr. T. Pinckney's predilection for France, in page 19, and his official conduct in London, in page 21, had, I think, better be omitted.

The reference to * * will, I hope, also be omitted.

Page 38. The President did not declare his opinion respecting the departure of the envoys to be settled when he first came to Trenton. In a letter from Massachusetts, he directed the Secretaries to consult together, and prepare a draft of instructions, and he intimated that he would suspend the departure of the envoys *for some time*. The draft of instructions was prepared, and the President after his arrival at Trenton candidly consulted all the Secretaries on the principles of the negotiation, but was silent on the question whether the mission ought immediately to proceed.

The instructions were settled in a consultation which terminated only after eleven o'clock in the evening. The next morn-

ing, before breakfast, the President informed the Secretary of State by letter, that he had decided that the envoys should depart immediately. The peculiar indelicacy of his conduct consisted in first *encouraging an expectation* that the mission would be suspended until a change of circumstances occurred; secondly, in availing himself of opinions, so far only as they could serve his own concealed views; and thirdly, in deciding contrary to what was expected, without hearing the arguments of the officers on a collateral point which he well knew they deemed of importance. It must be evident that no man's character can be safe, when opinions can be required in a partial manner. Justice demanded either that the Secretaries should not be at all consulted, or that they should be permitted to record their sentiments respecting any points which in their judgments were connected with the general question of the mission.

Page 42. I perceive no reason why the eventual provision for negotiation should not have been public. Indeed, secrecy is impracticable with respect to the appointment of ministers under our Constitution.

Page 49. The *two* insurrections cost, collectively, near a million and a half of dollars.

Page 49. *Two* persons were convicted,—one appeared from documents, which were laid before the President, to be a person greatly deficient in reason, in short, nearly an idiot; the other, such an one as you have described.

Page 50. I have heard that the declaration attributed to the President was made, but I do not clearly recollect the evidence. It rests in my memory, however, that I was credibly informed that the declaration was made, in presence of several persons, to Doctor Rush.

Page 50. That Messrs. Dallas and Lewis addressed such a letter to the President is certain. Lewis mentioned the fact to his friends in Philadelphia, and Dallas read the letter to Mr. Liston!! I feel some delicacy in mentioning the circumstance of the letter, and would not do so if the fact had not otherwise become public. If the paragraph is retained, you ought to rest the fact on evidence derived from the conversations of the

counsel. The name of Mr. Liston ought not to be mentioned. It is a curious fact, however, that Dallas, Ned Livingstone, and other democrats, have been more frequently in the train, and much more intimate with Mr. Liston, than the men who are accused as belonging to the British faction. I do not suspect these democrats of being bribed by Mr. Liston, though, on less evidence than exists against them, they have been willing to keep alive suspicions against much honester men.

Page 51. It will, I think, be sufficient to state *that the facts are founded on the best information*—they will not be disputed.

Page 54. I have no reason to doubt the correctness of this declaration as you mean to be understood; but it will be well to reflect whether you have not advised some connection with England with the view of prosecuting joint hostilities with France. If so, the declaration ought to be properly qualified.

Page 55 and 56. This subject is of peculiar delicacy, as it affects others who are your friends. I think you ought not to suggest a doubt respecting the treaty which was not explicitly avowed by you under the signature of Camillus, and that you ought to refer to that work for your opinions. As to the mode of ratification, there were different opinions among men whose intentions were equally good, the merits of which opinions cannot be discussed. I am of opinion that no advantage can result from turning the public attention to points, which then were, and ever will, remain doubtful.

Your proposal to send Mr. Jefferson, or Mr. Madison, to France, I always thought a mistake. I believe a disclosure of it will do you no good, and that, in the progress of our affairs, the knowledge that such advice was given by you, will do harm. It is a fact, however, which you have an unquestionable right to publish if you think proper. The time may come (but I think it has not yet arrived) for a full disclosure of the part which every man has acted in relation to the great questions which have arisen at different times under the present government.

The last page ought, in my opinion, to be considerably altered. I think the letter may, with propriety, be sent to your friends elsewhere than in New England, if it is published at all.

The letter ought, and will, influence the election; if it is sent merely as a defence of your character, and that of your friends, and not to influence the election, the publication should be deferred till after the election is over. A principal merit of the composition consists in its candor and temper; particular caution is therefore necessary in stating *all* the motives of the publication. I have thought hitherto that Mr. Adams ought, by all fair and honorable means, to be deprived of votes. If your letter should be sent to Connecticut in its present form, I suspect that it would be inferred to be your *expectation at least*, that Mr. Adams would obtain all the votes of that State. The expression of such an expectation might, in some degree, contribute to produce that effect. I expect to visit my friends in a short time, and wish the question to remain undetermined.

There is a party in this State (Maryland) who consider Mr. Adams as a character exactly suited to their views, and I believe it to be their intention to give him their exclusive support. To counteract this policy, it is necessary that some federal votes should be withdrawn from Mr. Adams. This would not increase the chances of Mr. Jefferson's election, though it would probably be the means of referring the choice of a President to the House of Representatives.

Perhaps the motives of writing the letter may be thus explained:—1st. That it is necessary to the *defence* of your character; and secondly, that for the reason assigned, you are seriously apprehensive of fatal consequences from a re-election of Mr. Adams—that you find, however, many federalists, whose opinions you respect, who entertain no such apprehensions—that your letter is dictated by a desire of informing them of facts and circumstances which have guided your judgment, and of which they are presumed to be unacquainted. That you are apprised of the bad consequences which might result from a public investigation of the conduct and character of Mr. Adams, and that deference for the opinions of those who are his friends and supporters, has induced you to confine the circulation of your letter to gentlemen of known respectability and prudence, who will dispassionately weigh your objections and decide according to what shall appear to be the true interest of the country.

What precedes is written upon the supposition that the letter is to be transmitted according to your suggestion; but as to the measure itself, I can give no opinion; my feelings and individual judgment are in favor of it. I never liked the half-way plan which has been pursued. It appears to me that federal men are in danger of losing character in the delicate point of sincerity; —nevertheless, when I consider the degree of support which Mr. Adams has already received; that our friends in Massachusetts say that they still *prefer* the election of Mr. Adams; that the country is so divided and agitated as to be in some danger of civil commotions, I cannot but feel doubts as to any measure which can possibly increase our divisions. You can judge of the state of public opinion in the Eastern States better than I can. *If the popular sentiment is strong in favor of Mr. Adams—if the people in general approve of his late public conduct, or if there is a want of confidence for any reason in General Pinckney*, I should think the publication ought to be suppressed; on the contrary, if the publication would *increase the votes for General Pinckney, and procure support to him in case he should be elected*, it would certainly be beneficial. Notwithstanding your impressions to the contrary, I am not convinced that Mr. Adams can seriously injure your character. At the moment of an election many men who consider themselves honest will affect or be really convinced, in some degree, of things which, in more serene moments, they cannot bring their minds to believe.

I am, with great sincerity, yours.

P. S.—It would seem from the papers, that the mission to France has terminated as I predicted. I am not, however, such a wizard as to tell what is to be done next. The situation of the country is such as to demand all the skill of the great Master of Diplomacy.

VANS MURRAY TO HAMILTON.

PARIS, October 9th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I was extremely flattered by the confidence which your letter by Mr. Colbert proved you have in my disposition to follow your wishes. A letter from you is no affair of ceremony. It is an obligation on any man who flatters himself with the hope of your personal esteem. Mr. Colbert gave it to me yesterday. I immediately, in particular, addressed a letter to Bonaparte, and made use of your name, which I was sure would be pleasing to him. To-day I dined with him. The Secretary of State, Mr. Maret—a very clever fellow—assured me that he received it kindly, and I can hope something good from him. If any come it will be your work. I never before spoke or wrote to Bonaparte on any affair other than public business. It will be very pleasing to you, if we succeed, that your silent agency works good to the unhappy and meritorious at such a distance. I know nothing better belonging to reputation. In two days I go to the Hague to my post; wherever I am, I beg you to command my services in all things in my power.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

BROOKLINE, Saturday, October 11th, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 2d did not reach me until last evening, it having been accidentally detained at the stage-house in this village several days. The President is on the point of departure for the seat of government, so that no opportunity of conveyance by a private gentleman could be found; I have therefore sent you a letter by a sure hand to the post-office, whence it undoubtedly goes in the President's regular package of letters this day, to Quincy. I have chosen this method as more sure of reaching

his own hand than if I had sent it by a servant, who would have been obliged to deliver it, perhaps, to another servant instead of the President or his secretary. Our people, after all their scolding, seem now to admit more generally that Massachusetts ought fairly to vote for A. and P.; but you know that we can only give conjectures until the meeting of our legislature.

Although I am *not an influential* man, and wish I was not so thought to be, I expect at least one, and if printed, several copies of your *justificatory letter*.

Dr. Dwight is here, stirring us up to oppose the demon Jacobinism. A new paper, to be entitled the "New England Anti-Jacobin," is to be published at Boston, and circulated as extensively as possible, especially through New England; the labors of many good men are expected in its support, and yours among the rest. Some good may reasonably be expected from it in the discrimination of useful truths, in correcting some of the dangerous errors embraced by the federalists, in uniting and keeping them united, and in some measure preparing them for the evils they cannot shun; but the object is too vague and the means too inconstant to satisfy all our anxieties.

The President has been endeavoring to be calm and discreet, and has discovered a desire to be visited by the individuals of the "—— faction" whom he has formerly proscribed.

Yours affectionately and faithfully,

G. CABOT.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

NEW-YORK, November 18, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

You no doubt have seen my pamphlet respecting the conduct and character of President Adams. The press teems with replies, and I may finally think it expedient to publish a second time. In this case I shall reinforce my charges by new anecdotes. My friends will, no doubt, be disposed to aid me. You probably

possess some which are unknown to me. Pray let me have them without delay.

You will observe that a prejudice is attempted to be excited against you as wishing to bring about an alliance with Great Britain. Explain to me fully this affair. I remember that you once consulted me about the expediency of the measure, and that I in reply gave you my opinion. I think it was that the thing was in any event problematical, that it was not advisable to go into at the time—that the most prudent course would be for Great Britain to have a power competent to the purpose vested in her Minister in this country, and to take the matter *ad referendum* to be governed by future circumstances.

I have not a copy of my letter. You will oblige me by letting me have it.

Yours faithfully and unalterably.

GOODHUE TO HAMILTON.

SALEM, November 15, 1800.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I received your pamphlet, for which I thank you. I have always been of opinion that we have been actuated by a pernicious policy in being so silent respecting Mr. A. The public have been left thereby to form opinions favorable to him, and of course unfavorable to those who were the objects of his mad displeasure. I abominate the hypocritical part which we have been necessitated to act in consequence thereof to promote our elections, &c.

Our General Court have appointed their electors, and I believe them all good men. Ames tells me, who was present, that they were alive to the object of having no one chosen who would not vote for General P., as well as Mr. A. Therefore, take it for granted, that they may be relied on to that point. . . . . You know my wish is, that Mr. P. should be the man, and I would

even hazard the election of Mr. Jefferson rather than not obtain my wish. Adieu.

With great regard, I am your faithful

B. GOODHUE.

M'HENRY TO HAMILTON.

BALTIMORE, November 19th, 1800.

* * * * The chief will destroy himself fast enough without such exposures. Can it happen otherwise to a man (as I wrote the other day to Mr. Wolcott) who, whether sportful, playful, witty, kind, cold, drunk, sober, angry, easy, stiff, jealous, careless, cautious, confident, close or open, is so, almost always in the *wrong place*, and to the *wrong persons*.

My great fear is that while he is destroying himself he will destroy the government also.

Those among the federalists in this State, I mean those within my observation, the most anxious for the election of Mr. Adams, pretend to consider the publication of your letter rather calculated to distract than to do good. Mr. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, writes me: "I have read Mr. Hamilton's pamphlet. The drift of its publication at this time, I conjecture, was not so much with a view of vindicating his character, as to prevent the electors in Massachusetts from scattering their votes, in order to secure the election of Mr. Adams, in preference to Mr. Pinckney. All with whom I have conversed, blame, however, Mr. Hamilton, and consider his publication as ill-timed. Although I pay deference to the opinion of others, whose motives I know to be good, yet I cannot help differing from them in this instance. The assertions of the pamphlet, I take it for granted, are true—and if true, surely it must be admitted, that Mr. Adams is not fit to be President, and his unfitness should be made known to the electors and the public. I conceive it a species of treason to conceal from the public his incapacity." Let this console you from one of the wisest, most prudent, and best men in the United States.

The statement of my last conversation with the President was made official, and entered in the letter-book appropriated to record communications with him. I presume the book containing it has been burnt with the other records of the department. I wish the remembrance of it, which harasses my feelings, could have been destroyed also. The folly, madness, and insatiable vanity of this man is excited by, and descends to, things the most trifling.

A few days after my dialogue with the President, Tousard came and told me,—"Well, I have at last seen the President—a very extraordinary conversation with which he has favored me. You must not tell, however, that *I have seen him.*" I replied I would not, as it belonged to valets de chambre only to see great men. Among other things the President complained in a violent passion that he was neglected by every officer, for that forts had been named "PICKERING, HAMILTON, and M'HENRY," and that not one of them had been called ADAMS, except perhaps a diminutive work at Rhode Island. The supple Frenchman no doubt satisfied the angry chief, for Tousard informs me, that before his leaving him, he put his hand on his shoulder, and mildly assured him he should be appointed colonel of the second regiment of artillery and engineers in a few days.

When I employed Tousard on the fortifications to the Eastward, the President wrote me a surly letter upon the subject, which made it necessary for me to reply, that Tousard had been employed, because I could find no other person qualified to send on the business. This pacified the madman, and Tousard was permitted to remain.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

BROOKLINE, November 29, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

It is too late to use the letter you inclosed me in Vermont, and here it is unnecessary. I am satisfied the votes in this State and New Hamphire will be all for A. and P. You will have

seen with some pleasure that our legislature have conducted in the manner that was predicted by our friend Mr. Lowell, jun. To his efforts, indeed, much of the success may be attributed. Some fears are entertained lest the electors in Rhode Island, though decidedly federal, will not all vote for P. To avert such a misfortune, Ames has written earnest expostulations, which will be communicated to the electors or some of the influential ones, and Mr. Mason, who will be at Providence on Monday, carries with him a copy of a letter just received by me from Mr. Wolcott, containing a paragraph from Judge Washington, extremely well calculated to induce a fair and equal vote for Pinckney in New England.

Admitting that your friends "are dismayed" by your letter concerning Mr. A., it is nevertheless possible you may be right in publishing it. I am of opinion that no publication of the kind could have been well received at this time in any part of the United States, and this opinion is manifestly supported by the fact—

> "Truths would you teach or save a sinking land,
> All shun, none aid you, and few will understand."

So said the man who had more good sense than commonly falls to the lot of a poet. I don't think the case exactly parallel, yet I cannot omit to remind you of "Burke's Reflections," which were reprobated almost universally when they first appeared. Even those who approved the sentiments, thought the avowal of them imprudent, and the publication of them untimely. I wish some one, who is more in the world than I am, and who feels, if possible, *as much interest* in every thing that affects you as I feel, would furnish you with correct information of all the opinions which are expressed by sensible men, and especially by your friends; while I cannot conceal that some of these would be unpleasant to hear, I am persuaded that most of them are explicable on the principles of human nature, and do not, in the smallest degree, inculpate the writer. Men are easily made angry with the messenger of ill news, and they who love

their ease listen with great impatience to those who tell them they must no longer indulge it.

Some who feel great dislike to Mr. Adams, are disappointed that you have treated him with so much moderation; they opened your book with the expectation of seeing Mr. Adams convicted of designs to involve the country in war with Great Britain, that he might thus secure to himself the support of those numerous but mistaken people, whose animosity to Great Britain is ardent and inveterate. They expected you would describe in just but glowing colors his pernicious jealousy of Washington's superior merits and fame, and the intolerance of such a spirit toward all men who enjoy a great degree of public confidence. They expected you would have analyzed him so effectually as to prove that he is and must be but little attached to the support of public credit and the rights of property; and that his ideas respecting commerce and the use it may be put to in our foreign politics, are more unsound than were Jefferson's or Madison's—in a word, that war with England, privateering, and paper money, with all their baneful appendages and consequences, are viewed by him not as evils to be deprecated, but resources to be preferred to that stable condition aimed at by the Washington system, which he hates, and which he has been constrained by circumstances to support. Yet, the men who looked for all this, acknowledge it would have been highly impolitic and injudicious if you had executed it. There are others, but they are not numerous, who think you have done too much already in the crimination of Mr. Adams—all agree that the execution is masterly, but I am *bound* to tell you that you are accused by respectable men of egotism, and some very worthy and sensible men say you have exhibited the same *vanity* in your book, which you charge as a dangerous quality and great weakness in Mr. Adams. I should have left it to your enemies to tell you of the censures of your friends, if I was not persuaded that you cannot possibly mistake my motives, or doubt of the sincerity of my affection or the greatness of my esteem.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE CABOT.

GEN. GUNN TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, December 11th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I have seen a list of the names of the South Carolina electors —they will all vote for Jefferson and Col. Burr. Gen. Pinckney will not get one vote. Yours sincerely,

JAMES GUNN.

GEN. GUNN TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, December 18th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

The issue of the election of President and Vice President, so far as it depended upon the individual States, is at length settled. Jefferson and Burr have the major vote, and it may with truth be said that John Adams has damned our cause, for the *double chance* was lost in South Carolina, owing to General Pinckney refusing to give up Mr. Adams.

The federalists appear to have no plan; common danger will make them unite. Adams is no longer the *mar-plot*, and your aid is necessary.

With this view of the subject, permit me to offer for your consideration, the policy of the federal party *extending the influence of our Judiciary;* if neglected by the federalists, the ground will be occupied by the enemy the very next session of Congress, and, sir, we shall see —— and many other scoundrels, placed on the seat of Justice. Within two years the Senate will be democratic —at the commencement of Jefferson's administration the Senators will stand 17 federal and 15 anti-federal.

Men of sense, in every State, must go into the State legislatures, and mind for *future events*. With the aid of some judicious management, the federal party will unite in every quarter, and,

in future men *of sense* will be preferred, and the bloated pride of an individual treated with disdain.

Gen. Davie arrived with the treaty last evening. I learn from him, that Mr. Ellsworth was landed in the British empire, and intends returning to France for the benefit of his health.

It is the opinion of all well-informed men in Europe, that a treaty of *partition* will be concluded by the great powers, and the lesser powers used as *small change*.

Yours sincerely, &c.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

Easton (Pennsylvania), Dec. 14, 1800.

My Dear Sir:

After an absence of four months in the woods, I returned hither on the evening of the 10th instant, and this is the first opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 13th ult.

A few days before I left the woods, I received, from a friend in Philadelphia, your pamphlet concerning the conduct and character of President Adams. You say the press teems with replies. I have yet seen none of them, and therefore cannot tell what facts or anecdotes would be useful or pertinent in your future publications, and as you desired such communications "without delay," it would now probably be too late to make them.

That I ever wished to bring about an alliance with Great Britain, to link our interest and our fate with hers, cannot be true. But when in 1798, I, in common with others, discerned a rupture with France almost inevitable, it was certainly natural and proper to think what would be the most effectual means of carrying on the war; and as natural to think some plan of co-operation with Great Britain, *then at war with France*, for our mutual safety and advantage *against a common enemy*, to be expedient. But as it was this expected rupture with France, which

alone led me to think of some connection with Great Britain, so my ideas never went beyond that object.

You remember that I wrote to you on this subject, and that you replied—that I requested your opinion, and that you gave it against going immediately into an alliance with Great Britain. Your recollection is correct. I have sought for and found the letters. If you preserved mine, you will find it under the date of March 25th, 1798, and which refers to another of the same date, giving an account of the recent conduct of the French government towards the United States. I subjoin an extract, containing every syllable that I wrote you on the subject of any connection with Great Britain.

(*Extract.*)

What shall we say to the British Government? You hint at nothing. The opposition party have often insinuated that a treaty, offensive and defensive, has doubtless been already concluded with Great Britain. A friend of mine yesterday told me that he was asked if such a treaty had not arrived. The truth is, that not one syllable has been written to Mr. King, or any one else, upon the subject. I confess it to have been my opinion for some time that provisional orders should be sent to Mr. King. Mr. King, in one of his latest letters, desires to be particularly instructed. The dispatch boat* may be directed to go from France to England with such instructions, which will be in cipher, or may go directly to Falmouth, and there may ascertain whether our envoys are, or are not in France.

Your ideas communicated on this subject, and on the facts stated in the inclosed, will be highly acceptable to me. I wish to receive them on Wednesday.

Agreeable to your request, I inclose your original of March 27, 1798, in answer to the above.

With true respect and esteem,

I remain, my dear Sir, ever yours,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

* The dispatch boat was the United States brig Sophia, then going to France with orders to the envoys relative to their return.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 16th, 1800.

It is now, my dear sir, ascertained that Jefferson or Burr will be President, and it seems probable that they will come with equal votes to the House of Representatives. It is also circulated here, that, in this event, the federalists in Congress, or some of them, talk of preferring Burr. I trust New England, at least, will not so far lose its head as to fall into this snare. There is no doubt but that, upon every virtuous and prudent calculation, Jefferson is to be preferred. He is by far not so dangerous a man; and he has pretensions to character.

As to *Burr*, there is nothing in his favor. His private character is not defended by his most partial friends. He is bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the plunder of his country. His public principles have no other spring or aim than his own aggrandisement, *per fas et nefas*. If he can, he will certainly disturb our institutions, to secure to himself *permanent power*, and with it *wealth*. He is truly the Catiline of America; and, if I may credit Major Wilcocks, he has held very vindictive language respecting his opponents.

But early measures must be taken to fix on this point the opinions of the federalists. Among them, from different motives, Burr will find partisans. If the thing be neglected, he may possibly go far.

Yet it may be well enough to throw out a lure for him, in order to tempt him to start for the plate, and then lay the foundation of dissension between the two chiefs.

You may communicate this letter to *Marshall* and *Sedgwick*. Let me hear speedily from you.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

December 17, 1800.

Your last letter, my dear sir, has given me great pain; not only because it informed me that the opinion in favor of Mr. Burr was increasing among the federalists, but because it also told me that Mr. was one of its partisans. I have a letter from this gentleman, in which he expresses decidedly his preference of Mr. Jefferson. I hope you have been mistaken, and that it is not possible for him to have been guilty of so great duplicity.

There is no circumstance which has occurred in the course of our political affairs, that has given me so much pain as the idea that Mr. Burr might be elevated to the Presidency, by the means of the federalists. I am of opinion, that this party has hitherto solid claims of merit with the public, and so long as it does nothing to forfeit its title to confidence, I shall continue to hope that our misfortunes are temporary, and that the party will ere long emerge from its depression. But if it shall act a foolish or unworthy part in any capital instance, I shall then despair.

Such without doubt will be the part it will act, if it shall seriously attempt to support Mr. Burr, in opposition to Mr. Jefferson. If it fails, as after all is not improbable, it will have riveted the animosity of that person, will have destroyed or weakened the motives to moderation which he must at present feel, and it will expose them to the disgrace of a defeat in an attempt to elevate to the first place of the government, one of the worst men in the community.

If it succeeds, it will have done nothing more nor less, than place in that station a man who will possess the boldness and daring necessary to give success to the Jacobin system, instead of one, who for want of that quality, will be less fitted to promote it.

Let it not be imagined that Mr. Burr can be won to the federal views. It is a vain hope. Stronger ties, and stronger inducements than they can offer, will impel him in a different direc-

tion. His ambition will not be content with those objects which virtuous men, of either party, will allot to it, and his situation and his habits will oblige him to have recourse to corrupt expedients, from which he will be restrained by no moral scruple. To accomplish his end, he must lean upon unprincipled men, and will continue to adhere to the myrmidons, who have hitherto surrounded him. To these he will no doubt add able rogues of the federal party, but he will employ the rogues of all parties, to overrule the good men of all parties, and to prosecute projects which wise men of every description will disapprove.

These things are to be inferred with moral certainty from the character of the man. Every step in his career, proves that he has formed himself upon the model of *Catiline*, and he is too cold-blooded, and too determined a conspirator ever to change his plan.

What would you think of these toasts and this conversation at his table within the last three or four weeks?

1st. The French republic.

2d. The Commissioners on both sides who instigated the Convention.

3d. Bonaparte.

4th. La Fayette.

(What would you think of his having seconded the positions that it was the interest of this country to allow the belligerent powers to bring in and sell their prizes, and build and equip ships in our ports? Can it be doubted that a man who has all his life speculated upon the popular prejudices, will consult them in the object of a war when he thinks it is expedient to make one? Can a man who, despising democracy, has chimed in with all its absurdities, be diverted from the plan of ambition which must have directed his course? They who suppose it must understand little of human nature.)

If Jefferson is President, the whole responsibility of bad measures will rest with the anti-federalists. If Burr is made so by the federalists, the whole responsibility will rest with them. The other party will say to the people, We intended him only for Vice-President; true, he might have done very well, or been at least

harmless. But the federalists, to disappoint us, and a majority of you took advantage of a momentary superiority to put him in the first place. He is therefore their President, and they must answer for all the evils of his bad conduct. And the people will believe them.

Will any reasonable calculation on the part of the federalists uphold the policy of assuming so great a responsibility in the support of so unpromising a character? The negative is so manifest, that, had I not been assured of the contrary, I should have thought it impossible that assent to it would have been attended with a moment's hesitation.

Alas! when will men consult their reason rather than their passions? Whatever they may imagine, the desire of mortifying the adverse party must be the chief spring of the disposition to prefer Mr. Burr. This disposition reminds me of the conduct of the Dutch moneyed men, who, from their hatred of the old aristocracy, favored the admission of the French into Holland to overturn every thing.

Adieu to the federal Troy if they one introduce this Grecian horse into their citadel.

Trust me, my dear friend, you cannot render a greater service to your country, than to resist this project. Far better will it be to endeavor to obtain from Jefferson assurances on some cardinal points.

1st. The preservation of the actual fiscal system.

2d. Adherence to the neutral plan.

3d. The preservation and gradual increase of the navy.

4th. The continuance of our friends in the offices they fill, except in the great departments, in which he ought to be left free.

OTIS TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, December 17th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

There exists the strongest probability that the electoral votes are equally divided between Messrs. Jefferson and Burr. We have certain advices from South Carolina and Georgia, and wait only for intelligence from Kentucky and Tennessee to ascertain the fact. The gentlemen of the opposition are of opinion that this will be the case. The question now is, in what *mode shall* the friends of the federal government take advantage of this casualty? Can any terms be obtained from Mr. Burr favorable to the true interest of the country, and is he a man who will adhere to terms when stipulated? Is it advisable to attempt a negotiation with him—and in what manner and through what channel shall it be conducted? We are inclined to believe that some advantage may be derived from it, but few of us have a personal acquaintance with Mr. Burr. It is *palpable* that to elect him would be to cover the opposition with *chagrin*, and to sow among them the seeds of a morbid division. But whether in any event he would act with the friends to the Constitution, or endeavor to redeem himself with his old party by the violence of his measures and the overthrow of the Constitution, is a doubt which you may assist us to resolve. Your local situation and personal acquaintance with these men and the state of parties, enables you to give an opinion upon a subject in which all the friends to the country have a common interest, and if you can venture to repose confidence in me, I will most solemnly pledge myself that your sentiments shall be reserved within my own breast, or communicated only to those whom you may designate. Should our expectation be realized, which we shall know in a day or two, is it advisable to send a messenger to New-York to confer with *friends there*, or attempt to bring Mr. Burr here? What should be the outlines of an agreement with him, and (alas! it is a difficult question,) what security can be devised for his adherence to it?

I am anxious to act correctly and judiciously. It would be distressing to omit or misdirect an effort which might be beneficial to the country, or preserve the Constitution, and I presume that honor and duty will sanction every endeavor to preserve it, even by an ineligible instrument. The treaty is before the Senate, and I believe will be found another chapter in the book of humiliation.

All claims for spoliation, it is said, are suspended during the war, all public ships captured by *each* party are to be surrendered, and in the language of the *case* of Bullum *v.* Boatum, after paying all costs we are permitted to *begin again de novo.* It is very *doubtful* in my mind whether the Senate ratify.

SEDGWICK TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, December 17th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

The substance of the convention with France will, I presume, be known publicly in a few days. In the mean time I communicate, in confidence, some part of its character. It contains no stipulation for satisfaction of the injuries we have received. It makes the treaty of '78 a subject of future negotiation. It engages that we shall return, in the condition they now are, all our captures. It makes neutral bottoms a protection to their cargoes, and it contains a stipulation directly in violation of the 25th article of our treaty with Great Britain. Such are the blessed effects of our mission! These are the ripened fruits of this independent administration! Our friends in the Senate are not enough recovered from their astonishment to begin to reflect on the course they shall pursue. After this information, it will be needless to add, that the mind, as well as body of Mr. Ellsworth, are rendered feeble by disease. He has resigned as chief justice.

The votes in Georgia are given equally for Jefferson and Burr. It is generally supposed they will be so in Kentucky and

Tennessee. This has rendered the Jacobins in the House more civil in their attentions than I have ever known them. Should the House have to decide between these *rivals*, *my opinion would prefer the former* for reasons which will readily occur to you. In this, many of my friends differ from me. They suppose that Burr, if preferred, will be compelled to throw himself into the hands of the federal party.

GENERAL GUNN TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, December 18th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I presume some of your friends will furnish you with a copy of the *French* convention. The thing is detestable. The independence of our country humbled to the dust.

The President this day nominated Mr. Jay chief justice. Mr. Ellsworth resigned. Mr. Jay, having once declined the office of chief judge, it is no compliment to re-appoint him to that office—nor was it decent to wound the feelings of Judge Patterson. Either Judge Patterson or General Pinckney ought to have been appointed; but both those worthies are your friends.

Jefferson and Burr, as yet, have an equal vote; and it is generally believed they will each have *seventy-three votes*. It is probable that the federalists will have to choose among rotten apples.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, December 19th, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

In company this day, I heard much said about the treaty brought to us by Mr. Dacre; wherefore, as it is now a subject of

public conversation, those restraints which I had imposed on myself are removed, and I take the earliest opportunity of saying one word about it to you.

The negotiation appears to have been very well conducted on the part of France, and the result is probably equal to her wishes. It contains, among other things, a stipulation that, as the parties cannot agree about the old treaties, nor the indemnities mutually due, or claimed, they will negotiate further about them at a convenient period, and until they shall have agreed on those points, the treaty shall have no operation, but the relations of the two countries shall be regulated by that convention; that public ships, which have been, or may be taken, shall be mutually restored; that property captured and not yet definitely condemned, shall be restored on proof of ownership; that debts shall be paid; that the vessels of the two nations, and their privateers as well as their prizes, shall be treated in the respective ports of each other, as those of the nation the most favored; that free ships shall make free goods, and the converse; that when neutral ships are convoyed, the word of the officer commanding the convoy shall be taken, and no visit allowed; that when armed ships shall be permitted to enter with their prizes, they shall not be obliged to pay any duty, nor shall the prizes be seized, nor shall the officers of the place make examination concerning the lawfulness of such prizes; but this stipulation is not to extend beyond the most favored nation; that privateers belonging to an enemy shall not fit their ships, sell or exchange their prizes, or purchase provisions, except what may be needful to go to the next ports of their own country. Finally, this convention is unlimited in its duration.

Such, my dear sir, is the result of our French negotiation, which evidently places us in a critical situation.

It is supposed that Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr will have equal votes, and various speculations are made and making on that subject. At first it was proposed to prevent any election, and thereby throw the government into the hands of a President of the Senate. It even went so far as to cast about for the person. This appeared to me a wild measure, and I endeavored to dis-

suade those gentlemen from it, who mentioned it to me. It seems now to be given up. The object with many is to take Mr. Burr, and I should not be surprised if that measure were adopted. Not meaning to enter into intrigues, I have merely expressed the opinion, that since it was evidently the intention of our fellow-citizens to make Mr. Jefferson their President, it seems proper to fulfil that intention.

The answer is simple, and on mere reasoning conclusive, but it is conclusive to unimpassioned sentiment. Let the representatives do what they may, they will not want arguments to justify them, and the situation of our country (doomed perhaps to sustain, unsupported, a war against France or England) seems, indeed, to call for a vigorous practical man. Mr. Burr will, it is said, come hither, and some who pretend to know his views think he will bargain with the federalists. Of such a bargain, I shall know nothing, and have declared my determination to support the constitutionally-appointed administration, so long as its acts shall not in my judgment be essentially wrong. My personal line of conduct gives me no difficulty, but I am not without serious apprehension for the future state of things.

The anti-federal party is, beyond question, the most numerous at present; and should they be disappointed in their expectation as to the President, they will generally, I believe, oppose the government with embittered rancor. The best federalists will, I apprehend, support but feebly a man whom (unjustly perhaps) they consider as void of principle; and a government whose force lies in public opinion, will, under such circumstances, be critically situated.

I should do injustice to my opinion of your intuitive judgment, should I dilate any farther. You are better acquainted with characters and opinions than I possibly can be; and your ideas will have weight on the minds of many here, should you think proper to transmit them through some accustomed channel of communication. The subject is certainly of high consideration, and the circumstances of the moment are of peculiar delicacy.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

NEW-YORK, December 22d, 1800.

I entirely agree with you, my dear sir, that in the event of Jefferson and Burr coming to the House of Representatives, the former is to be preferred. The appointment of Burr as President would disgrace our country abroad. No agreement with him could be relied upon. His private circumstances render disorder a necessary resource. His public principles offer no obstacle. His ambition aims at nothing short of permanent power and wealth in his own person. For Heaven's sake, let not the federal party be responsible for the elevation of this man.

The convention with France is just such an isssue as was to have been expected. It plays into the hands of France by the precedent of those principles of navigation, which she is at this moment desirous of making the basis of a league of the northern powers against England. This feature will be peculiarly disagreeable to the latter; and, as it relates to the general politics of the world, is a make-weight in the wrong scale.

The stipulation about privateers and prizes is of questionable propriety. If third powers are entitled to the benefit of annulling our treaties with France, it is a plain violation of our compact with Great Britain.

But I rather think it the better opinion, that pending the differences which produced that measure, it is a matter purely between France and ourselves, by which no third power has a right to profit; and that even the *statu quo* would not have been a violation of our engagements with Great Britain.

Thus situated, I am of opinion the treaty must be ratified. The contrary condition would, I think, utterly ruin the federal party, and endanger our internal tranquillity. Moreover, it is better to close the thing where it is, than leave it to a Jacobin administration to do much worse.

This is a deliberately formed sentiment, and I hope, will accord with the conclusions of our friends. At the same time, I wish it to be declared by our friends in the Senate, that they think the treaty liable to strong objections, and pregnant with

dangers to the interests of this country; but having been negotiated, they will not withold their assent.

Reasons should be given.

HAMILTON TO GOVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW-YORK, December 24, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I will run the risk with you of giving countenance to a charge lately brought against me, though it has certainly had a very false direction. I mean that of being fond of giving advice.

Several friends at Washington inform me, that there is likely to be much hesitation in the Senate about ratifying the convention with France. I do not wonder at it, and yet I should be sorry that it should mature itself into a disagreement to the instrument. Having received its present form, I think it should be ratified.

In my opinion there is nothing in it contrary to our treaty with Great Britain. The annulling of our former treaties with France was an act of reprisal in consequence of hostile differences, of which no other power had a right to benefit; and which, upon an accommodation, might have been rescinded, even to the restoration of the *statu quo*. Great Britain is now in this respect in a better situation than she was when she made the treaty. She has so far no good cause to complain.

There are, indeed, features which will not be pleasant to the British cabinet, particularly the principle that, free ships shall make free goods, and that the flag of ships of war shall protect. As these are points upon which France was endeavoring to form hostile combinations against Great Britain, the giving place to them in the convention will have an unfriendly countenance towards her; and as it regards good understanding between her and us, is to be regretted in the present moment. Yet we had a right to make these stipulations, and as they may be fairly *supposed* to be advantageous to us, they are not in fact indications of

enmity. They give no real cause of umbrage, and considering the general interests of Great Britain, and her particular situation, it does not seem probable that they will produce on her part a hostile conduct.

As to the indemnification for spoliations, that was rather to be wished than expected, while France is laying the world under contribution. The people of this country will not endure that a definitive rupture with France shall be hazarded on this ground.

If this convention is not closed, the leaving of the whole subject open will render it easier for the Jacobin administration to make a worse thing.

On the whole, the least evil is to ratify. The contrary would finish the ruin of the federal party, and endanger our internal tranquillity. It is better to risk the dangers on the other hand, than on this side.

Another subject. *Jefferson or Burr?* the former without all doubt. The latter, in my judgment, has no principle, public or private; could be bound by no agreement; will listen to no monitor but his ambition; and for this purpose will use the worst part of the community as a ladder to climb to permanent power, and an instrument to crush the better part. He is bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the resources that grow out of war and disorder; or by a sale to a foreign power, or by great peculation. War with Great Britain would be the immediate instrument. He is sanguine enough to hope every thing, daring enough to attempt every thing, wicked enough to scruple nothing. From the elevation of such a man may heaven preserve the country!

Let our situation be improved to obtain from Jefferson assurances on certain points; the maintenance of the present system, especially on the cardinal articles of public credit—a navy, neutrality. Make any discreet use you may think fit of this letter.

WOLCOTT TO HAMILTON.

(PRIVATE.)

WASHINGTON, December 25th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your favor of the 16th and 17th; that of the 16th I communicated to Mr. Marshall and Mr. Sedgwick. The first has yet expressed no opinion. The last mentioned gentleman has been inclined to support Mr. Burr, and this, I find, appears to be a prevailing and increasing sentiment of the federalists. With what degree of seriousness the intention is formed, and whether it can succeed, are points upon which no opinion can be given. It will be well to bring the attention of our eastern friends to the subject, that their ideas may be seasonably communicated to the gentlemen in Congress.

An attempt will be made to enact the new Judiciary bill. It is probable that it will succeed, but what appointments shall we have?

You will be afflicted on reading the treaty with France. Mr. Ellsworth's health is, I fear, destroyed. He has resigned his office, and the President has sported a nomination of Mr. Jay, who will not accept the appointment. It is probable that the treaty will undergo some modification by the Senate.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

NEW-YORK, December 26th, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

The post of yesterday gave me the pleasure of a letter from you. I thank you for the communication. I trust that a letter which I wrote you the day before the receipt of yours will have duly reached you, as it contains some very free and confidential observations ending in two results.

1st. That the convention with France ought to be ratified as the least of two evils.

2d. That *on the same ground Jefferson* ought to be preferred to *Burr*.

I trust the federalists will not be so mad as to vote for the *latter*. I speak with an intimate and accurate knowledge of character. His elevation can only promote the purposes of the desperate and profligate.

If there be a man in the world I ought to hate, it is Jefferson. With Burr I have always been personally well. But the public good must be paramount to every private consideration.

My opinion may be freely used with such reserves as you shall think discreet.

HAMILTON TO BAYARD.

NEW-YORK, December 27, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

Several letters to myself and others from the city of Washington, excite in my mind extreme alarm on the subject of the future President. It seems nearly ascertained that Jefferson and Burr will come into the House of Representatives with equal votes, and those letters express the probability that the federal party may prefer the latter. In my opinion a circumstance more ruinous to them, or more disastrous to the country, could not happen.

This opinion is dictated by a long and close attention to the character of B., with the best opportunities of knowing it—an advantage of judging, which few of our friends possess; and which ought to give some weight to my opinion.

Be assured, my dear sir, that this man has no principle, public nor private. As a politician, his sole spring of action is an inordinate ambition; as an individual, he is believed by friends as well as foes to be without *probity;* and a voluptuary by system —with habits of expense that can be satisfied by no fair expe-

dients. As to his talents, great management and cunning are the predominant features; he is yet to give proofs of those solid abilities which characterize the statesman. Daring and energy must be allowed him; but these qualities under the direction of the worst passions, are certainly strong objections, not recommendations. He is of a temper to undertake the most hazardous enterprises, because he is sanguine enough to think nothing impracticable; and of an ambition that will be content with nothing less than *permanent* power in his own hands. The maintenance of the existing institutions will not suit him; because, under them, his power will be too narrow and too precarious. Yet the innovations he may attempt, will not offer the substitute of a system *durable* and *safe*, calculated to give lasting prosperity, and to unite liberty with strength. It will be the system of the day sufficient to serve his own turn, and not looking beyond himself. To execute this plan, as the good men of the country cannot be relied upon, the worst will be used. Let it not be imagined that the difficulties of execution will deter, or a calculation of interest restrain. The truth is, that under forms of government like ours, too much is practicable to men who will, without scruple, avail themselves of the bad passions of human nature. To a man of this description, possessing the requisite talents, the acquisition of permanent power is not a chimera. I *know* that Mr. Burr does not view it as such, and I am sure there are no means too atrocious to be employed by him. In debt, vastly beyond his means of payment, with all the habits of excessive expense, he cannot be satisfied with the regular emoluments of any office of our government. Corrupt expedients will be to him a *necessary* resource. Will any prudent man offer such a President to the temptations of foreign gold? No engagement that can be made with him can be depended upon while making it; he will laugh in his sleeve at the credulity of those with whom he makes it;—and the first moment it suits his views to break it, he will do so.* Let me add, that I could scarcely name a discreet man

* A recent incident will give you an idea of his views as to foreign politics. I dined with him lately. His toasts were, "The French Republic," "The Commissioners who negotiated the Convention, "Buonaparte," "The Marquis La Fayette."

of either party in our State, who does not think Mr. Burr the most unfit man in the United States for the office of President. Disgrace abroad, ruin at home, are the probable fruits of his elevation. To contribute to the disappointment and mortification of Mr. J., would be, on my part, only to retaliate for unequivocal proofs of enmity; but in a case like this, it would be base to listen to personal considerations. In alluding to the situation, I mean only to illustrate how strong must be the motives which induce me to promote *his* elevation in exclusion of another.

For heaven's sake, my dear sir, exert yourself to the utmost to save our country from so great a calamity. Let us not be responsible for the evils, which in all probability will follow the preference. All calculations that may lead to it must prove fallacious.

Accept the assurances of my esteem,

A. HAMILTON.

JOHN MARSHALL TO HAMILTON.

January 1st, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I received this morning your letter of the 26th of December. It is, I believe, certain that Jefferson and Burr will come to the House of Representatives with equal votes. The returns have been all received, and this is the general opinion.

Being no longer in the House of Representatives, and consequently compelled by no duty to decide between them, my own mind had scarcely determined to which of these gentlemen the preference was due. To Mr. Jefferson, whose political character

His doctrines, that it would be the interest of this country to permit the indiscriminate sale of prizes by the belligerent powers; and the building and equipment of vessels—a project amounting to nothing more nor less (with the semblance of equality), than to turn all our naval resources into the channel of France, and compel Great Britain to war. Indeed Mr. Burr must have war, as the instrument of his ambition and cupidity. The peculiarity of the occasion will excuse my mentioning in confidence the occurrences of a private table.

is better known than that of Mr. Burr, I have felt almost insuperable objections. His foreign prejudices seem to me totally to unfit him for the chief magistracy of a nation which cannot indulge those prejudices without sustaining deep and permanent injury. In addition to this solid and immovable objection, Mr. Jefferson appears to me to be a man who will embody himself with the House of Representatives. By weakening the office of President, he will increase his personal power. He will diminish his responsibility, sap the fundamental principles of the government, and become the leader of that party which is about to constitute the majority of the legislature. The morals of the author of the letter to Mazzei cannot be pure.

With these impressions concerning Mr. Jefferson, I was in some degree disposed to view with less apprehension any other characters, and to consider the alternative now offered as a circumstance not to be entirely neglected.

Your representation of Mr. Burr, with whom I am totally unacquainted, shows that from him still greater danger than even from Mr. Jefferson may be apprehended. Such a man as you describe is more to be feared, and may do more immediate, if not greater, mischief. Believing that you know him well, and are impartial, my preference would certainly not be for him; but I can take no part in this business. I cannot bring myself to aid Mr. Jefferson. Perhaps respect for myself should, in my present situation, deter me from using any influence (if, indeed, I possessed any) in support of either gentleman. Although no consideration could induce me to be the Secretary of State while there was a President whose political system I believed to be at variance with my own, yet this cannot be so well known to others, and it might be suspected that a desire to be well with the successful candidate had, in some degree, governed my conduct.

With you I am in favor of ratifying our treaty with France, though I am far, very far, from approving it. There is, however, one principle which I think it right to explain.

Our envoys were undoubtedly of opinion that our prior treaty with Britain would retain its stipulated advantages, and I

think that opinion correct. Was our convention with any other nation than France, I should feel no solicitude on this subject. But France, the most encroaching nation on earth, will claim a literal interpretation, and our people will decide in her favor. Those who could contend that a promise not to permit privateers of the enemy of France, to be fitted out in our ports, amounted to a grant of that privilege to France, would not hesitate to contend that a stipulation giving to France, on the subject of privateers and prizes, the privileges of the most favored nation, placed her on equal ground with any other nation whatever. In consequence of this temper in our country, I think the ratification of the treaty ought to be accompanied with a declaration of the sense in which it is agreed to. This, however, is only my own opinion.

With very much respect and esteem,
I am, dear Sir, yours obediently,
J. MARSHALL.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, January 5th, 1801.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your favors of the 24th and 25th of last month. I am much obliged by both.

The convention with France will be ratified sub modo. Such, at least, is my opinion. I wish first to strike out the 2d and 3d article; secondly, to fix a limitation of time. The 2d article, by suspending the operation, admits the existence of former treaties. The restitution of our trophies stipulated by the third, may damp the spirit of our country. That nation, which will permit profit or convenience to stand in competition with honor, is on the steep descent to ruin. If, with the exception of those articles, and a limitation of time, the convention be mutually ratified, I shall think it no bad bargain. Will the French Consul ratify it when so curtailed and limited? Per-

haps, if his affairs are prosperous, he will not. Some gentlemen propose adding a clause, to declare that it shall not prejudice former treaties. This appears dangerous, because, if afterwards ratified without that clause, such ratification may be construed as an assent to the conclusion, which the declaration was intended to obviate.

On the election between Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr, there is much speculation. Some, indeed most, of our eastern friends are warm in support of the latter, and their pride is so much up about the charge of influence, that it is dangerous to quote an opinion. I trust they will change or be disappointed, for they appear to be moved by passion only. I have, more at the request of others than from my own mere motion, suggested certain considerations not quite unworthy of attention; but it is dangerous to be impartial in politics. You, who are temperate in drinking, have never, perhaps, noticed the awkward situation of a man who continues sober after the company are drunk.

Adieu, my dear Hamilton. God bless you, and send you many happy years.

HAMILTON TO LA FAYETTE.

New-York, January 6th, 1801.

I have been made happy, my dear friend, by the receipt of your letter of the 12th August last. No explanation of your political principles was necessary to satisfy me of the perfect consistency and purity of your conduct. The interpretation may always be left to my attachment to you. Whatever difference of opinion may on any occasion exist between us, can never lessen my conviction of the goodness both of your head and heart. I expect from you a return of this sentiment as far as concerns the heart. It is needless to detail to you my political tenets. I shall only say that I hold, with *Montesquieu*, that a government must be fitted to a nation as much as a coat to an in-

dividual; and consequently, what may be good at Philadelphia may be bad at Paris, and ridiculous at Petersburgh.

I join with you in regretting the misunderstanding between our two countries. You will have seen by the President's speech, that a door is again opened for terminating them amicably; and you may be assured that we are sincere, and that it is in the power of France, by reparation to our merchants for past injury, and the stipulation of justice in future, to put an end to the controversy.

But I do not like much the idea of your being in any way implicated in the affair, lest you should be compromitted in the opinion of one or the other of the parties.

It is my opinion, that it is best for you to stand aloof; neither have I abandoned the idea that it is most advisable for you to remain in Europe till the difference is adjusted. It would be very difficult for you here to steer a course which would not place you in a party, and remove you from the broad ground which you now occupy in the hearts of all. It is a favorite point with me, that you shall find in the universal regard of this country all the consolations which the loss of your own (for so I consider it) may render requisite.

Believe me always,

Your very cordial and faithful friend,

A. H.

BAYARD TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, January 7th, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I have been but a few days in this city, but since my arrival have had the pleasure to receive the letter which you did me the honor to write on the 7th ult. I am fully sensible of the great importance of the subject to which it relates, and am therefore extremely obliged by the information you have been so obliging as to communicate.

You have probably seen a letter addressed by Colonel Burr to General Smith, constituting him his proxy to disavow the least desire on his part to interfere with the intention of his party to place Mr. Jefferson in the chair of President.

I mention this letter merely for the opportunity of stating, that it is here understood to have proceeded, either from a false calculation as to the result of the electoral votes, or was intended as a cover to blind his own party.

By persons friendly to Mr. Burr, it is distinctly stated, that he is willing to consider the federalists as his friends, and to accept the office of President as their gift.

I take it for granted that Mr. Burr would not only gladly accept the office, but will neglect no means in his power to secure it. Certainly, he cannot succeed without the aid of the federalists, and it is even much to be doubted whether their concurrence will give him the requisite number of States. It is considered, that at least in the first instance, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New-York, will vote for Mr. Jefferson. It is probable that Maryland and Vermont will be divided; it is therefore counted that upon the first ballot, it would be possible to give to Mr. Burr six votes. It is calculated, however, and strongly insisted by some gentlemen, that a persevering opposition to Mr. Jefferson would bring over New-York, New Jersey, and Maryland. What is the probability relative to New-York, your means enable you to form the most correct opinion. As to New Jersey and Maryland, it would depend upon Mr. Lynn, of the former, and Mr. Dent, of the latter State.

I assure you, sir, there appears to be a strong inclination in a majority of the federal party to support Mr. Burr. The current has already acquired considerable force, and manifestly increasing. The vote which the representation of a State enables me to give would decide the question in favor of Mr. Jefferson. At present I am by no means decided as to the object of preference. If the federal party should take up Mr. Burr, I ought certainly to be impressed with the most undoubting conviction before I separated myself from them. With respect to the personal

qualities of the competitors, I should fear as much from the sincerity of Mr. Jefferson (if he is sincere), as from the want of probity in Mr. Burr. There would be really cause to fear that the government would not survive the course of moral and political experiments to which it would be subjected in the hands of Mr. Jefferson. But there is another view of the subject which gives me some inclination in favor of Burr. I consider the State ambition of Virginia as the source of present party. The faction who govern that State, aim to govern the United States. Virginia will never be satisfied but when this state of things exists. If Burr should be the President, they will not govern, and his acceptance of the office, which would disappoint their views, which depend upon Jefferson, would, I apprehend, immediately create a schism in the party which would soon rise into open opposition.

I cannot deny, however, that there are strong considerations, which give a preference to Mr. Jefferson. The subject admits of many doubtful views, and before I resolve on the part I shall take, I shall wait the approach of the crisis which may probably bring with it circumstances decisive of the event. The federal party meet on Friday, for the purpose of forming a resolution as to their line of conduct. I have not the least doubt of their agreeing to support Burr. Their determination will not bind me, for though it might cost me a painful struggle to disappoint the views and wishes of many gentlemen with whom I have been accustomed to act, yet the magnitude of the subject forbids the sacrifice of a strong conviction.

I cannot answer for the coherence of my letter, as I have undertaken to write to you from the Chamber of Representatives, with an attention divided by the debate which occupies the House.

I have not considered myself at liberty to show your letter to any one, though I think it would be serviceable if you could trust my discretion in the communication of it.

I am, with great consideration, &c.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

New-York, January 9th, 1801.

I have lately, my dear sir, written you two letters. As they contained some delicate topics, I shall be glad to know that they got to hand.

It has occurred to me that perhaps the federalists may be disposed to play the game of preventing an election, and leaving the executive power in the hands of a future President of the Senate. This, if it could succeed, would be, for obvious reasons, a most dangerous and unbecoming policy. But it is well it should be understood that it cannot succeed. The anti-federalists, as a body, prefer Jefferson; but among them are many who will be better suited by the *dashing, projecting* spirit of Burr; and who, after doing what they will suppose to be *saving appearances*, they will go over to Mr. Burr. *Edward Livingston* has declared among his friends, that his first ballot will be for Jefferson—his second for Burr.

The present is a crisis which demands the exertions of men who have an interest in public order.

GUNN TO HAMILTON.

Washington, January 9th, 1801.

Dear Sir:

I have received your favor of the 24th ult. It is probable a rejection of the French convention would excite some unpleasant feeling in America. But its ratification would be dishonorable. The second and third articles were rejected by very large majorities—Gen. Armstrong voted againt the second article, which alarmed the Jacobins. With some other exceptions it is believed the thing will be ratified by the unanimous vote of the Senate.

On the subject of choosing a President, some revolutionary opinions are gaining ground, and the Jacobins are determined to resist the election of Burr at every hazard—most of the Jacobin members will be instructed not to vote for Col. Burr. I have seen a letter from Mr. Madison to one of the Virginia representatives, in which he says, that, in the event of the present House of Representatives not choosing Mr. Jefferson President, that the next House of Representatives will have a right to choose one of the two having the highest number of votes, and that the nature of the case, aided with the support of the great body of the people, will justify Jefferson and Burr *jointly* to call together the members of the next House of Representatives, previous to the 3d of December next, for the express purpose of choosing a President, and that he is confident *they* will make a *proper* choice. In other parts of his letter he speaks of America being degraded by the *attempt* to elect Burr President. What say you, my friend?—the little Virginian must have been a little ferocious at the time he wrote to his friend. I am confident the present House will not elect Col. Burr, and am persuaded the democrats have taken their ground with a fixed resolution to destroy the government rather than yield their point. I fear some of our friends have committed themselves by writing improperly to Burr. We know the man, and those who put themselves in his power will repent their folly.

Yours, &c.

RUTLEDGE TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, January 10th, 1801.

MY DEAR SIR:

I yesterday had the honor of receiving your favor of the 4th instant, and am justly sensible of the distinction conferred upon me by your confidence. My determination to support Mr. Burr has been shaken by your communication, and I shall make,

among those who with you are anxious to preserve the public order at this crisis, all the use of it that its seasonableness and value will enable me to do. Viewing Mr. J. and Mr. B. separately, each appears improper for the presidency; but, looking at them together, and comparatively, the federalists think their preferring Burr will be the least mischief they can do. His promotion will be prodigiously afflicting to the Virginia faction, and must disjoint the party. If Mr. B.'s presidency be productive of evils, it will be very easy for us to excite jealousy respecting his motives, and to get rid of him. Opposed by the Virginia party, it will be *his interest* to conciliate the federalists; and we are assured by a gentleman who lately had some conversation with Mr. B. on this subject, that he is disposed to maintain and expand our systems. Should he attempt an usurpation, he will endeavor to accomplish his ends in a bold manner and by the union of daring spirits,—his project in such a shape cannot be very formidable, and those employed in the execution of it can very easily be made way with. Should Mr. Jefferson be disposed to make (as he would term it) an improvement, (and as we should deem it a subversion) of our Constitution, the attempt would be fatal to us, for he would begin by democratizing the people and end with throwing every thing into their hands.

If the House of Representatives was to vote on this all important subject under existing impressions, I believe the termination would be as follows: South Carolina, Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, for Burr; and Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Jersey, and New-York, for Mr. Jefferson. Vermont would be divided, and Maryland is yet undecided. This is I believe the state of present sentiment, but I will review my decision, and in doing so, consider with due deliberation your very important observations on this eventful subject; and I shall also communicate them to a few of my friends, to whom I may show them without being indiscreet. The public prints will have informed you how we have occupied ourselves here;—our House is at present discussing the judiciary bill, which we hope very confidently to carry. It will greatly extend the judiciary power,

and of course greatly widen the basis of government. We shall profit of our short-lived majority, and do as much good as we can before the end of this session. The Senate are hammering at our French treaty. I am surprised and mortified that our envoys signed it. It appears to me that they have done nothing on the real points of complaint, nay, have done worse than nothing. One part of the treaty abandons all our rights, and the other part makes us the dupes of France in the game she means to play against the maritime power of England. Before this theory can be effected, the *armed neutrality* must have one hundred ships of the line to convoy their merchantmen, or the English *will* search 'em. We lose our honor, by restoring the ships we have taken, and by doing so, perhaps, make an implicit acknowledgment of the injustice of our hostile operations, which will be brought against us in the future and frivolous negotiations into which we may enter for compensation.

Accept, I pray of you, my dear General, the homage of my veneration and respect, and believe me to be

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN RUTLEDGE.

SEDGEWICK TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, 10th January, 1801.

I delayed, my dear sir, an answer to your letter of the 22d purposely, because from it I was induced to believe I was soon to be favored with another containing additional observations on the convention.

On that subject, at present, I shall say nothing. It is not doubted that the votes for Jefferson and Burr have been equally given, and that from one of those, the House must select the next President of the United States. It is known, that all the democratic representatives are decidedly in favor of Jefferson. These will give seven certainly, possibly eight votes, but it is believed he cannot be elected without the concurrence of the federalists,

and we entertain no doubt, that should *we* prefer Burr, *they* will not dare to persevere in voting for Jefferson, and thereby prevent any election. How then shall we determine? The question is difficult and the result doubtful. No decision is yet had, though there is, I believe, a strong preponderance of opinion against Jefferson.

In his favor, it is said, that it was the intention of all those electors who voted for him and Burr, that he should be elected. This beyond all doubt, as to a large majority of those electors, is true. But wherefore, it is asked, was this preference given to him? Because, it is answered, he was known to be hostile to all those great systems of administration, the combined effect of which is our national prosperity, and all we possess of national character and respectability; because he is a sincere and enthusiastic democrat in principle, plausible in manners, crafty in conduct, persevering in the pursuit of his object, regardless of the means by which it is attained, and equally regardless of an adherence to truth, as demonstrated by his letter to Mazzei, his declaration in the Senate on his first taking his seat there, &c. &c.; because he is known to be devoted to the views of those men, in his State, whose unceasing efforts it has been, and is, to reduce in *practice* the administration of this government to the *principles* of the old confederation, in which that State, by her numerous representatives, and the influence which she has on surrounding States, will be the dictatrix; because he is known to be servilely devoted to one foreign nation, under any form of government, and pursuing any system of measures, however hostile to this country, and unrelentingly hostile to another nation, and those the two nations on earth with which we have the most interesting relations, and with which it is most important to preserve an equal and impartial regard. Ought we then to respect the prefence which is given to this man from such *motives*, and by such *friends?*

As to the other candidate, there is no disagreement as to his character. He is ambitious—selfish—profligate. His ambition is of the worst kind; it is a mere love of power, regardless of fame, but as its instrument; his selfishness excludes all social

affections, and his profligacy unrestrained by any moral sentiments, and defying all decency. This is agreed, but then it is known that his manners are plausible—that he is dexterous in the acquisition and use of the means necessary to effect his wishes. Nothing can be a stronger evidence of this than the situation in which he stands at this moment—without any pretension from connections, fame, or services—elevated by his own independent means to the highest point to which all those can carry the most meritorious man in the nation. He holds to no previous theories, but is a mere matter-of-fact man. His very selfishness prevents his entertaining any mischievous predilections for foreign nations. The situation in which he lives has enabled him to discern and justly appreciate the benefits resulting from our commercial and other national systems, and this same selfishness will afford some security that he will not only patronize their support but their invigoration.

There are other considerations. It is very evident that the Jacobins dislike Mr. Burr as President—that they dread his appointment more than even that of General Pinckney.

On his part, he hates them for the preference given to his rival. He has expressed his displeasure at the publication of his letter by General Smith. This jealousy, and distrust, and dislike, will every day more and more increase, and more and more widen the breach between them. If, then, Burr should be elected by the federalists against the hearty opposition of the Jacobins, the wounds mutually given and received will probably be incurable. Each will have committed the unpardonable sin. Burr must depend on good men for his support, and that support he cannot receive but by a conformity to their views.

In these circumstances, then, to what evils shall we expose ourselves by the choice of Burr, which we should escape by the election of Jefferson? It is said, that it would be more disgraceful to our country and to the principles of our government. For myself, I declare I think it impossible to preserve the honor of our country or the principles of our Constitution by a mode of election which was intended to secure to prominent talents and virtues the first honors of our country, and for ever to disgrace

the barbarous institutions by which executive power is *to be transmitted through the organs of generation.* We have at one election placed at the head of our government a semi-maniac, and who, in his soberest senses, is the greatest marplot in nature; and at the next a feeble and false, enthusiastic theorist, and a profligate without character and without property, bankrupt in both. But if there remains any thing for us, in this respect, to regard, it is with the minority in the Presidential election; and can they be more disgraced than by assenting to the election of Jefferson—the man who has proclaimed them to the world as debased in principle and as detestable and traitorous in conduct? Burr is indeed unworthy, but the evidence of his unworthiness is neither so extensively known nor so conclusive as that of the other man.

It must be confessed that there is part of the character of Burr more dangerous than that of Jefferson. Give to the former a robable chance, and he would become an usurper. The latter might not incline, he certainly would not dare, to make the attempt. I do not believe that either would succeed, and I am even confident that such a project would be rejected by Burr as visionary.

At first, I confess I was strongly disposed to give Jefferson the preference; but the more I have reflected, the more I have been inclined to the other; yet, however, I remain unpledged, even to my friends, though I believe I shall not separate from them.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW-YORK, January, 10th, 1801.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your letter of the 5th instant. The scruples you express about the ratification of the convention are very respectable. No well-informed man can doubt, that it is an exceptionable instrument; but I continue of the opinion, that it is best upon the whole to ratify it unconditionally.

It does not appear to me that on fair construction, *the existence* of the old treaties is recognized; though a right of mutual indemnities as to the past is admitted. But inasmuch as it is declared, that they shall hereafter have no effect until a future agreement, this appears to me to amount to the *consent* of France, that they shall become inoperative and null; unless they shall be revived by the *consent* of the United States. So far I think that something is gained. For the right of one party to annul a treaty is a litigious right, never consummated till the other party waives its opposition. This is now in substance done by France. And, in my opinion, to have advanced so far is a matter of considerable importance.

The indemnification for spoliation is, I admit, virtually relinquished, as the price of a waiver of the treaties; but considering our situation, and the immense and growing power of France, that price is not too great.

Further, there are such potent obstacles in the nature of things to the obtaining of effectual indemnification, that it is very well to leave it to the chapter of accidents.

The restoration of ships of war is an unpleasant, and, I will not deny, rather a humiliating thing.

But as it is in *form* reciprocal, it does not seem to me that unequivocal species of dishonor, which ought to induce us to run great risks. Our conduct, heretofore, has gone on the ground, that though we ought not to submit to *unequivocal disgrace*, yet we ought not to be too susceptible or over-curious and nice. In this spirit, we have borne a great deal, sometimes too much, from all the *belligerents*. Circumstances do not now invite to a different course. Our rapid progress to *strength* will, ere long, encourage to and warrant higher pretensions.

You seem to have gotten over the difficulty of the supposed collision between the convention and our treaty with Britain. You already know that this accords with my opinion. Yet it seems to me the most thorny point, as it draws into question our faith towards a third power.

This gotten over, there is not, in my apprehension, any remaining obstacle to a full ratification which may not be overcome.

The limitation of the treaty as to time, is doubtless desirable; but we may be sure it will not be eternal in fact. Perpetual peace will not exist. A war cuts the knot, and leaves us free to renew or not, to renew absolutely or with qualifications.

With this view of the subject, I do not consider the objections to a simple ratification to be strong enough to countervail the dangers of a qualified one, which, certainly, will leave it in the option of the other party to recede.

It is possible, that in the pride of success our backwardness to ratify may be the pretext of a rupture to punish the presumption. Under existing circumstances, such an event would be disastrous, if not for the evils which the arms of France might inflict, yet for the hazard of internal schisms and discord. The mania for France has in a great degree revived in our country, and the party which should invite a rupture would be likely to be ruined.

Perhaps with the administration we are going to have, there may be less danger of rupture than with one of a different cast; yet not much reliance can be placed on this circumstance, and there is another side to the question which deserves attention.

If the present convention be ratified, our relations to France will have received a precise shape. To take up the subject anew, and mould it into a shape better according with Jacobin projects, will not be as easy, as, finding the whole business open, to give it that shape. I think it politic, therefore, to close as far as we can.

Again, it will be of consequence to the federal cause in future to be able to say, the federal administration steered the vessel through all the storms raised by the contentions of Europe into a peaceful and safe port. This cannot be said, if the contest with France continues open.

Inclosed you have some recent intelligence, which seems to strengthen the argument for a simple ratification. Great Britain stands on a precipice. The misfortune for her is, that there are manifest symptoms of a depreciated and depreciating paper currency. This may cut deep.

The result is, that good understanding with the United

States is more than ever necessary to Great Britain. She will not lightly take umbrage while France is in a position to ride a high horse. These facts cannot prudently be excluded from the calculation.

So our eastern friends want to join the armed neutrality and make war upon Britain. I infer this from their mad propensity to make *Burr* President. If Jefferson has prejudices leading to that result, he has defects of character to keep him back. Burr, with the same propensities, will find the thing necessary to his projects, and will *dare* to hazard all consequences. They may as well think to bind a giant by a cobweb, as his ambition by promises.

GOVERNEUR MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, January 16th, 1801.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have yours of the ninth. I had already replied to those which it refers to. The idea that a division of the votes would bring over the aristocrats, who call themselves democrats, to vote for Burr, is unfounded. Were it otherwise, a number of federalists, that is, of republicans, would urge the experiment. The conviction that they will not abandon their man may induce the republicans to unite with the adversary, and give Mr. Jefferson a unanimous vote.

I have hinted, that should they find the opposition to him ineffectual, it might be advisable openly to declare, that, unable to estimate the respective merits of the candidates, whose virtues they are equally ignorant of, the republicans will join in the choice of the person whom they may designate. Under present circumstances, this appears to me the best expedient for avoiding all responsibility at the bar of public opinion, and that is important, for let the choice fall as it may, many will be displeased.

The present moment is indeed of high interest, but prudence

seems to be more necessary than any thing else. Not the cold quality, which avoids mistakes, but the active virtue, which corrects the evil of mistakes already made.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, January 16th, 1801.

MY DEAR SIR:

I this instant received your favor of the tenth. I thank you for it. The Aurora will have shown you the result of our deliberations on the convention, at least of those which went to a division worth noting. If it sticks in France, it will be respecting points on which the vote was unanimous, or nearly so.

As to the induction from the words of the second article, that the old treaties subsisted, though their operation was suspended, I think it undeniable, and when connected with certain rights given by the convention, which had been given both by those treaties and by the treaty with Britain, a construction less strained than many which become prolific in the management of a great power, would have involved us in serious difficulty. To Britain was given certain rights, limited by those of a singular kind previously given to France. In abolishing our treaties with the latter, that which we had made with the former obtained an *actual* extension, which we might *rightfully* restrain; for as she was no party, either to our treaties with France, or to the abrogation of them, she could not rightfully complain, had we thought fit to re-establish those treaties. When, therefore, *acknowledging their existence by suspending their effects generally*, we *particularly* stipulate, and *literally* renew a part, might not the French demand for the part so renewed a *priority*? In fact, might not France demand that a British ship should not bring into our ports a French prize? The privileges granted being *incompatible* and *exclusive*, the question of priority involves every thing. So much for that.

Those articles (the second and third) being left out, the convention must be considered merely as a treaty of peace. The pre-existence of war is admitted, and from the moment of that admission, there is an end to treaties and to claims of restitution and indemnity. Nothing, therefore, can make the matter more clear than to be perfectly silent.

Our negotiators huddled up a treaty, because there was to be a general peace; and you, my good friend, seem to think we should gulp it down because there is to be a general war. I took occasion early to declare in the Senate that we need not hurry the matter through, because, in my opinion, there would not be a general peace. Circumstances rush on to support my conjecture. Doubtless the First Consul, if the dice run against him, will agree to our offer. If they run in his favor they may reject it, and in like manner he might, under such circumstances, have freed himself from any *cobweb fetters*. His whole conduct is a comment on that text.

But you seem to fear for Britain, because she has brought paper money into fashion. This reason, my dear sir, is stronger against trusting her in commerce, than it is against confiding in her system of politics or war. Paper money, like ardent spirits, increases for a while the strength, though it consumes by degrees the fat, the muscles, and the viscera. At present, Britain presents a plump carcass for the poison to prey upon. With tolerable management, she may last at least ten years, and make, during that period, tremendous exertions. Rely on it, Denmark and Sweden will be sick of their bargain before midsummer next; and as to Paul Peter, remember what I told you of his fickle character. He cannot last long, and, deprived of commerce, will find his paper bubbles run down hill much faster than the paper guineas of his adversary. His mother was a different being, and yet, even with her gigantic talents, she must have failed in the prosecution of her schemes had she not obtained money on loan in Holland.

As to the continental war, I think France has pushed as far as reason will justify. Should she go farther south in Italy, and farther east in Germany, the Austrians, by rapid movements to

a central position, may give the Consul a blow he will never recover.

HAMILTON TO BAYARD.

NEW-YORK, January 16th, 1801.

[This letter was inserted by mistake on page 419, under date of Jan. 16, 1800.]

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW-YORK, January, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I hasten to give you some information which may be useful. I know as a fact that overtures have been made by leading individuals of the federal party to Mr. Burr, who declines to give any assurances respecting his future intentions and conduct, saying that to do it might injure him with his friends, and prevent their co-operation; that all ought to be inferred from the necessity of his future situation, as it regarded the disappointment and animosity of the anti-federalists; that the federalists, relying upon this, might proceed in the certainty that, upon a second ballot, New-York and Tennessee would join him. It is likewise ascertained that he perfectly understands himself with Edward Livingston, who will be his *agent* at the seat of government.

Thus you see that Mr. Burr is resolved to preserve himself in a situation to adhere to his former friends, engagements, and projects, and to use the federalists as tools of his aggrandisement.

The hope that by his election he will be separated from the anti-federalists, is a perfect farce.

He will satisfy them that he has kept himself free to continue his relations to them, and as many of them are secretly attached to him, they will all be speedily induced to rally under his standard, to which he will add the unprincipled of our party, and he will laugh at the rest.

It is a fact that Mr. Burr is now in frequent and close conference with a Frenchman, who is suspected of being an agent of the French government, and it is not to be doubted that he will be the firm ally of Buonaparte.

You are at liberty to show this letter to such friends as you think fit, especially Mr. Bayard, of Delaware, in whose principles and sound sense I have much confidence.

Depend upon it, men never played a more foolish game than will do the federalists, if they support Burr.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

ALBANY, Jan. 21, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

Being in a hurry to leave New-York for this place, I compressed, in a letter to Bayard, some observations which, had I time, I should have put in a reply to your last. I requested him to communicate it to you, and I beg of you, as you love your country, your friends, and yourself, to reconsider dispassionately the opinion you have expressed in favor of Burr.

I never was so much mistaken, as I shall be, if our friends, in the event of their success, do not rue the preference they will give to that Catiline. Adieu.

A. H.

HAMILTON TO ———.

ALBANY, February 22, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

After my ill success hitherto, I ought, perhaps, in prudence, to say nothing farther on the subject. But situated as things now are, I certainly have no advice to give. Yet I may, without impropriety, communicate a fact, it is this:

Colonel Burr is taking an active *personal part* in favor of Mr.

Clinton against Mr. Rensselaer, as Governor of this State. I have, *upon my honor*, direct and indubitable evidence, that between two and three weeks past, he wrote a very urgent letter to *Oliver Phelps*, of the western part of this State, to induce his exertions in favor of Clinton. Is not this an unequivocal confirmation of what I predicted, that he will, in every event, continue to play the Jacobin game? Can any thing else explain his conduct at such a moment, and under such circumstances? I might add several other things to prove that he is resolved to adhere to and cultivate his old party, who lately, more than ever, have shown the cloven foot of *rank Jacobinism*.

BAYARD TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, 8th March, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I left Washington on the 5th and arrived here last evening. The letter which you did me the honor to write the 22d ultimo, reached me on the 4th, when I was occupied in arrangements for leaving the seat of government.

I remained in Washington on the 4th through necessity, though not without some curiosity to see the inauguration, and to hear the speech. The scene was the same as exhibited upon former occasions, and the speech, in political substance, better than *we* expected; and not answerable to the expectations of the partisans of the other side.

After the inaugural ceremonies, most of the federal gentlemen paid their respects to the President and the Vice, and were received with very decent respect.

Mr. Adams did not attend. He has been sufficiently humbled to be allowed to be absent. Your views in relation to the election, differed very little from my own, but I was obliged to yield to a torrent, which I perceived might be diverted, but could not be opposed.

In one case I was willing to take Burr, but I never considered

it as a case likely to happen. If by his conduct he has completely forfeited the confidence and friendship of his party, and left himself no resort but the support of the federalists, there are many considerations which would have induced me to prefer him to Jefferson. But I was enabled soon to discover that he was determined not to shackle himself with federal principles; and it became evident that if he got in without being absolutely committed in relation to his own party, that he would be disposed and obliged to play the game of McKean upon an improved plan, and enlarged scale.

In the origin of the business I had contrived to lay hold of all the doubtful votes in the House, which enabled me, according to views which presented themselves, to protract or terminate the controversy.

This arrangement was easily made, from the opinion readily adopted from the consideration, that representing a small State without resources which could supply the means of self-protection, I should not dare to proceed to any length which would jeopardize the constitution or the safety of any State. When the experiment was fully made, and acknowledged upon all hands to have completely ascertained that Burr was resolved not to commit himself, and that nothing remained but to appoint a President by law, or leave the government without one, I came out with the most explicit and determined declaration of voting for Jefferson. You cannot well imagine the clamor and vehement invective to which I was subjected for some days. We had several caucuses. All acknowledged that nothing but desperate measures remained, which several were disposed to adopt, and but few were willing openly to disapprove. We broke up each time in confusion and discord, and the manner of the last ballot was arranged but a few minutes before the ballot was given. Our former harmony, however, has since been restored.

The public declarations of my intention to vote for Jefferson, to which I have alluded, were made without a general consultation, knowing that it would be an easier task to close the breach which I foresaw, when it was the result of an act done without concurrence, than if it had proceeded from one against a decision

of the party. Had it not been for a single gentleman from Connecticut, the eastern States would finally have voted in blank, in the same manner as done by South Carolina and Delaware; but, because he refused, the rest of the delegation refused; and because Connecticut insisted on continuing the ballot for Burr, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, refused to depart from their former vote.

The means existed of electing Burr, but this required his co-operation. By deceiving one man (a great blockhead), and tempting two (not incorruptible), he might have secured a majority of the States. He will never have another chance of being President of the United States; and the little use he has made of the one which has occurred, gives me but an humble opinion of the talents of an unprincipled man.

CONSTABLE TO HAMILTON.

PARIS, March 23d, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

Our government is doubtless informed of the treaty between this republic and Spain for the cession of Louisiana, of which Collaud is to be governor. I am told it is concluded.

Original inclosed to J. MADISON, Esq., Secretary of State, May 20th, 1807.

MADISON TO HAMILTON.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, May 26th, 1801.

SIR:

I have received your letter of the 20th, inclosing one from Paris, of March 23d. The cession of Louisiana by Spain to the French republic, referred to in the letter, had been previously signified to this department from several sources, as an event be-

lieved to have taken place. Supposing you might wish to repossess the letter from Mr. C., I herein return it.

I have the honor to remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES MADISON.

VAN VECHTEN TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I am enjoined by the General Committee to tax your goodness to prepare a short, temperate, and pertinent supplementary address, by way of reply to that of our opponents. This tax will be levied and collected without communicating whence it is derived.

WOOLSEY TO HAMILTON.

September 4th, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I am as much dissatisfied with the recent conduct of the Manumission Society as you can be, and have, out of doors, remonstrated against the measures which they have pursued, but without effect. My name appears as vice-president, although I have not for several years attended a meeting of the Society. I had almost determined before your note that I would remove my individual responsibility by a public protest against their measures. Your plan may be better, though I am very doubtful of its efficacy. If you would, after your return, incline to have the Society called together, I will apply to Mr. Willet Seaman, who is the president, for that purpose.

BUSHROD WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

WALNUT FARM, November 21, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter dated in September, came lately to my hands, after having made a circuitous route through many distant post-offices, as appears from the endorsement on it. * * *

The system of intolerance and proscription which seems to be the order of the day, from the General to many of the State governments will, I fear, produce a fatal schism, which may probably divide the States, as it already has the people. But I apprehend that the plan of Mr. Pendleton, which, not unlikely, is the plan of his party to obtain a general convention for reforming the Constitution, will bring us to this ultimate point of our political progress by a shorter road. I do not think that it requires the gift of prophecy to foretell the dissolution of the confederacy if a convention should be agreed to by two-thirds of the States at this, or perhaps at any other time.

With very great respect and esteem, &c.

JAY TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, November 15th, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

At present I have not leisure to mention more on this subject than that the gentleman who was thought of for a certain employment, declines it, nor does he know of any person who would probably be willing, and also well qualified, to execute what would be expected from him as necessary to insure success to the plan.

Yours, &c.

KING TO HAMILTON.

London, January 12, 1802.

Both as a friend and a father I do most unfeignedly participate and condole with you in the heavy affliction that has fallen upon your family. It would be altogether vain for me to have recourse to the usual topics of consolation. In so severe a calamity it must be sought for among the treasures of your own mind, which nature has so eminently endowed; and after a while it will likewise be found in the promising branches of your family which remain, to recall to your remembrance as well as to console you for the loss you have suffered.

With the most faithful regard and attachment, &c.

HAMILTON TO RUSH.

New-York, Feb. 12th, 1802.

Dear Sir:

I felt all the weight of the obligation which I owed to you and your amiable family for the tender concern they manifested in an event beyond comparison the most afflicting of my life; but I was obliged to wait for a moment of greater calm to express my sense of the kindness.

My loss is indeed great. The brightest as well as the eldest hope of my family has been taken from me. You estimate him rightly. He was a fine youth. But why should I repine? It was the will of heaven, and he is now out of the reach of the seductions and calamities of a world full of folly, full of vice, full of danger, of least value in proportion as it is best known. I firmly trust, also, that he has safely reached the haven of eternal repose and felicity.

You will easily conceive that every memorial of the goodness of his heart must be precious to me. You allude to one recorded

in a letter to your son. If no special reasons forbid it, I should be very glad to have a copy of that letter.

Mrs. Hamilton joins me in affectionate thanks to Mrs. Rush and yourself; our wishes for your happiness will be unceasing.

Very sincerely and cordially, &c.

MORRIS TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22d, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

You must pardon me for telling you I am sorry that you opposed sending a petition to Congress against the repeal of the law of last session for amending the judicial system. It will stop, I suppose, any such petitions which might have come on from the eastward, and thus leave our enemies to conclude against us from the silence of our friends. Moreover, it will enable your personal enemies to say, that you wished the repeal to take effect, so as to overturn the Constitution; and weak-minded friends may be hurt that the bar of a State should hold themselves too high to petition the legislature of the Union. However, what is done cannot be undone.

Would it not be useful to establish committees of correspondence from Baltimore to Boston, of which New-York to be the centre, as a more favorable position to collect opinions through that tract of country? If a general meeting of the citizens of New-York should be convened, it might be for the purpose of considering what constitutional measures can be adopted in the present moment to secure the independence of the State, and the national compact of the Union, from the dangers with which they are threatened. At such meeting, it might be useful to appoint a large committee, chiefly of merchants, composed of *moderate men*. You should not appear in all this. They will soon catch an *esprit de corps*. They may report simply resolutions, that the repeal is inexpedient, that a petition be presented

to the President, and that a committee be appointed to correspond with other committees.

This corresponding committee, selected from the first, and *appointed by the people*, may consist of the most intelligent and *moderate men*. In a few weeks they will find business for themselves and for Mr. President too. The petition might state, first, that the law to be repealed is considered as useful, and tending to the speedy administration of justice; secondly, that the expense, compared with the object or with the general amount of expenditure, is trifling; thirdly, that respect forbids the idea, which has been suggested by some, that the principal object of the repeal is to get rid of obnoxious judges—that, whatever may be the characters of those who sit in other circuits, those of the second circuit have deserved the public confidence; fourthly, that, without questioning the powers of Congress, it appears a point of such magnitude, and the result, if the law be unconstitutional, which is the opinion of many cool and discerning men, is fraught with such danger, that the petitioners hope he will interfere to prevent a decision, and thereby quiet the minds of many real friends to the national government and the independence of the several States, who view with extreme anxiety the present situation of our affairs.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

New-York, 27th February, 1802.

My Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 22d is the third favor I am indebted to you since you left New-York.

Your frankness in giving me your opinion as to the expediency of an application of our bar to Congress, obliged me. But you know we are not readily persuaded to think we have been wrong. Were the matter to be done over, I should pursue the same course. I did not believe the measure would be useful

as a preventive, and for the people an expression of an opinion by letter would be as good as a memorial.

It appeared to be best, because it saved our delicacy, and because in the abstract, I am not over fond of the precedent of the bar addressing Congress. But I did what I thought likely to do more good. *I induced* the Chamber of Commerce to send a memorial. As to the rest, I should be a very unhappy man, if I left my tranquillity at the mercy of the misinterpretations which friends as well as foes are fond of giving to my conduct.

Mine is an odd destiny. Perhaps no man in the United States has sacrificed or done more for the present Constitution than myself; and contrary to all my anticipations of its fate, as you know from the very beginning. I am still laboring to prop the frail and worthless fabric. Yet I have the murmurs of its friends no less than the curses of its foes for my reward. What can I do better than withdraw from the scene? Every day proves to me more and more, that this American world was not made for me.

The suggestions with which you close your letter suppose a much sounder state of the public mind than at present exists. Attempts to make a show of a general *popular* dislike of the pending measures of the government, would only serve to manifest the direct reverse. Impressions are indeed making, but as yet within a very narrow sphere.

The time may ere long arrive when the minds of men will be prepared to make an effort to *recover* the Constitution, but the many cannot now be brought to make a stand for its preservation. We must wait a while.

I have read your speeches with great pleasure. They are truly worthy of you. Your real friends had many sources of satisfaction on account of them. The conspiracy of dulness was at work. It chose to misinterpret your moderation in certain transactions of a personal reference.

A public energetic display of your talents and principles was requisite to silence the cavillers. It is now done. You, friend Morris, are by birth a native of this country, but by *genius* an exotic. You mistake, if you fancy that you are more of a favor-

ite than myself, or that you are in any sort upon a theatre suited to you.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW-YORK, March 4, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

You have seen certain resolutions unanimously pass our legislature for amending the Constitution; 1st, by designating separately the candidates for President and Vice-President; 2d, by having the electors chosen by the people in districts under the direction of the national legislature.

After mature reflection, I was thoroughly confirmed in my full impression, that it is true federal policy to promote the adoption of these amendments.

Of the first; not only because it is in itself right, that the people should know whom they are choosing, and because the present mode gives all possible scope to intrigue, and is dangerous (as we have seen) to the public tranquillity; but because in every thing which gives opportunity for juggling arts, our adversaries will nine times out of ten excel us.

Of the second; because it removes thus far the intervention of the State governments, and strengthens the connection between the federal head and the people, and because it diminishes the means of party combination, in which also, the burning zeal of our opponents will be generally an overmatch for our temperate flame.

I shall be very happy that our friends may think with me, and that no temporary motive may induce them to let slip the precious occasion in which personal motives induce the other party to forget their true policy.

We are told here, that at the close of your birthday feast, a strange *apparition*, which was taken for the Vice-President, appeared among you, and toasted "the union of all honest men."

I often hear at the corner of the streets important federal secrets, of which I am ignorant. This may be one.

If the story be true, 'tis a good thing, if we use it well. As an *instrument*, the person will be an auxiliary of *some* value; as a chief, he will disgrace and destroy the party.

I suspect, however, the folly of the mass will make him the latter, and from the moment it shall appear that this is the plan, it may be depended upon much more will be lost than gained. I know of no important character, who has a less *founded* interest than the man in question. His talents may do well enough for a particular plot, but they are ill suited to a great and wise drama. But what has wisdom to do with weak men? Adieu.

Yours truly,

A. HAMILTON.

JACKSON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 12, 1802.

I beg leave, my dear General, to request that you will notify the New-York State Society of the Cincinnati, that the triennial general meeting of the Society is to be held at the city of Washington on the first Monday in May next, where it is anxiously wished that their delegates may attend. The nomination of gentlemen in Congress who are members of the Society, may facilitate the convening of a quorum.

As President-General of the Society, your presence will be peculiarly gratifying to

Your faithful and affectionate servant,

W. JACKSON, *Secretary-General.*

TRUXTUN TO HAMILTON.

NORFOLK, 22d March, 1802.

DEAR SIR:

A variety of circumstances convinced me at Washington that my appointment was by no means congenial to the wishes of the President; and a little time after I came here made the fact so evident, that I at length considered my reputation deeply at stake in the hands of the present administration, and brought things to a point.

It is with pain and reluctance I quit the navy; but it was unavoidable, as you will see by the inclosed copy of a letter to the Secretary of the Navy. Although I had come on to Washington in January, on my way here (by appointment made by the President), to command the squadron destined for the Mediterranean, in the course of conversation at dinner in the palace, the President asked me which way I was travelling, whether I was going to the northward or southward. This question was astonishing, and the more so when I assure you, he never opened his lips to me on the subject of the squadron or of our Mediterranean affairs.

I think I can, with truth say, it was never intended that I should proceed on the command in question, if it could be decently avoided, and at the same time the appearance kept up. I shall make a visit of a few days to Colonel Parker, and proceed home.

I am, dear Sir,

Your very obedient humble servant,

THOMAS TRUXTUN.

TRUXTUN TO HAMILTON.

NORFOLK, 26th March, 1802.

DEAR SIR:

As an officer sacrificed by party spirit, and in the hope of a favorable change in the affairs of our once free and happy coun-

try, I think it a duty to address you as one of the remaining honest political fathers of it.

The present administration finding, as I verily believe, that it was not possible to succeed in bringing me over to prostitute my principles by forsaking the federal cause, and becoming a proselyte to their infernal doctrines and their measures, which will ere long destroy in toto the Constitution of our country, have adopted a scheme to compel me to quit the navy. The art with which this project was arranged, could not have been surpassed by any pettifogging lawyer in the United States, of talents superior to the actor (Mr. Secretary Smith) in the undertaking. But it was not for me at this period of my life, independent in my mind and fortune of public favor, to suffer any thing degrading to my honor by the sect, in violation of an agreement made with me previous to my leaving Washington for this borough, to take command of the squadron destined for the Mediterranean station. Early on my arrival here, I discovered the whole plan, and the cause of it, and my embarrassments were great, lest on quitting the service many of my federal friends, not knowing the real cause, should consider me blamable; but on reflection, and *mature reflection*, I considered that an honest representation of facts would reconcile them to my determination, especially as there was no alternative left but to quit the service or to show a meanness of spirit which I despise, and would not do to be possessed of the President's palace, with all his equipage, power and consequence.

Believing, as I did, that the sect viewed me with a jealous eye, I carried on much of my correspondence with the Secretary of the Navy, through Mr. Stoddart (the late Secretary of that department), and he will do me the justice to say, that I declared, before I left my home in New Jersey, and after I had journeyed on as far as Philadelphia, that I would not proceed without a captain under me (as Commodore Dale has), or if that grade of officer was inconvenient to furnish, on account of the few captains retained in service in consequence of the act of Congress of 1801, a lieutenant-commandant to supply the place of a captain; and, on my arrival at Washington, Mr. Smith furnished

me with a list of officers ordered to my ship (the Chesapeake), headed by Captain Campbell, which list is now before me. But some time after I arrived here, and had completed the equipment of the ship, I received a letter from the Secretary, stating that Captain Campbell, from some accident, could not, or would not, be able to go; and, although I had gone through the fatigue of preparing the ship for the expedition, with only two very young lieutenants (all that was sent me), I was directed to make another lieutenant from the inexperienced midshipmen on board, none of which had been more than a voyage or two at sea. This order I could not comply with, nor would the ship have been safe in a common squall, when I was at any time off deck, with officers in charge thereon so very destitute of nautical information. This circumstance only admitted, how much more so would the risk of the honor of our flag have been in battle, especially if any accident happened to the commanding officer?

But, sir, Messrs. Jefferson, Gallatin, Smith and Co., knew full well I would not submit to this state of things; and it was, in my belief, their plan to get rid of me. They can never forgive me for having *taken and beaten* Frenchmen. I have committed a dreadful crime for having spilt French blood in the execution of performing faithfully my duty; and I shall be for ever held up at their caucuses as undeserving of any honors from their party; and the ungrateful and ungracious manner, with the countenance shown by Mr. Jefferson when he presented me with the medal, was a convincing proof that, while he executed the law in doing it, he felt as much rancor as he did (when Vice-President) at signing the late Judiciary bill as President of the Senate. When I have the honor to see you, I will detail further the conduct of the administration in my case; till then, I trust that my friends will stand convinced that I have only acted as an officer ought to act for his own honor, and for the honor and good of his country. For it would have been running, as I have stated, every risk to have proceeded in the service directed in the manner it was intended to dispatch me, if it ever was intended to dispatch me.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

THOMAS TRUXTUN.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

New-York, April 6th, 1802.

Amidst the humiliating circumstances which attend our country, all the sound part of the community must find cause of triumph in the brilliant display of talents which have been employed, though without success, in resisting the follies of an infatuated administration; and your personal friends will not have much reason for mortification on account of the part you have performed in the interesting scene. But, my dear sir, we must not content ourselves with a temporary effort to oppose the approach of evil. We must derive instruction from the experience before us; and learning to form a just estimate of the things to which we have been attached, there must be a systematic and persevering endeavor to establish the fortune of a great empire on foundations much firmer than have yet been devised. What will signify a vibration of power, if it cannot be used with confidence or energy, and must be again quickly restored to hands which will prostrate, much faster than we shall be able to rear, under so frail a system? Nothing will be done, until the structure of our national edifice shall be such as naturally to control eccentric passions and views, and to keep in check demagogues and knaves in the disguise of patriots. Yet, I fear a different reasoning will prevail, and an eagerness to recover lost power will betray us into expedients which will be injurious to the country, and disgraceful and ruinous to ourselves. What meant the *apparition* and the *toast* which made part of the *after-piece* of the *birthday festival?* Is it possible that some new intrigue is about to link the federalists with a man who can never be any thing else than the bane of a good cause? I dread more from this than from all the contrivances of the bloated and senseless junto of Virginia.

The federalists and anti-federalists of this State united in certain amendments to the Constitution now before your House, having for objects, 1st, to discriminate the candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency; 2d, to have the electors of these

officers chosen by the people, in districts, under the direction of Congress. Both these appear to me points of importance in true federal calculation. Surely the scene of last session ought to teach us the intrinsic demerits of the existing plan. It proved to us, how possible it is for a man in whom no party had confidence, and who deserves the confidence of none, by mere intrigue and accident, to acquire the first place in the government of our nation; and it also proves to us, how serious a danger of convulsion and disorder is incident to the plan. On this point, things have come to my knowledge improper for a letter, which would astonish you. Surely, we ought by this time to have learnt, that whatever multiplies the opportunities and means of cabal, is more favorable to our adversaries than to us. They have certainly the advantage in the game, by greater zeal, activity, and subtlety; and especially by an abandonment of principle. On all these accounts, it is our true policy to abridge the facilities to cabal, as much as possible, in all our public institutions and measures. As to the second of the amendments, it has *ever* appeared to me as sound principle to let the federal government rest, as much as possible, *on the shoulders of the people*, and as little as possible on those of the State legislatures. The proposition accords with this principle; and, in my view, it is farther recommended by its tendency to exclude *combination*, which, I am persuaded, in the general and permanent course of things, will operate more against than for us. Colonel Burr, without doubt, will resist these amendments; and he may induce some of our friends to play into his hands; but this will be a very bad calculation, even admitting the inadmissible idea, that he ought to be adopted as a chief of the federal party. We never can have him fairly in our power, till we render his situation absolutely hopeless with his old friends. While the indiscriminate voting prevails, he will find it his interest to play fast and loose, and to keep himself in a state to be at the head of the anti-federal party. If these hopes are cut off, he will immediately set about forming a third party, of which he will be at the head; and then, if we think it worth the while, we can purchase him with his flying squadrons.

These observations are, of course, hypothetical: for, to my

mind, the elevation of Mr. Burr, by federal means, to the chief magistracy of the United States, will be the worst kind of political suicide. Adieu, my dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely, &c.

KING TO HAMILTON.

LONDON, April 8th, 1802.

DEAR SIR:

By Dr. Romayne I send you a pamphlet lately written upon the interesting subject of the public credit of this country. The author is a member of Parliament, an old and practical banker —brother to the President of the Bank of England, and for many years much conversant with the great money operations of the country. When you have read it, I ask the favor of you to send it, together with the other pamphlet respecting the sugar colonies, to our friend Mr. George Cabot.

I do not enter upon the situation of Europe since the peace. It would be too long a labor to do so. While the war lasted, constant and endless occasions presented themselves to employ myself here in the benefit of our countrymen, and I flatter myself for the public advantage.

The revision of our commercial treaty has been a service, to which I have all along looked as the conclusion of my mission. As, however, I have no reason to suppose it likely soon to take place, I am not much inclined to remain here a mere figurant, and I am therefore seriously thinking of my return. Without deciding any thing on this point, I confidentially ask your opinion respecting it. This I have not done except in the present instance.

Very faithfully, &c.

Before returning, I am desirous to pass a few months upon the continent.

BAYARD TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, April 12th, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

The apprehensions you appear to entertain of the effect of the intrigues of a certain person, if you will take my word for it, are wholly without ground.

In fact, little has been attempted and nothing accomplished. I answer only for the time present, because I believe the gentleman is waiting to see the result of the new state of things more completely developed before he decides upon the course he will pursue. The *apparition* in the *afterpiece* was not unexpected, but the toast was.

An intimation was given, that, if he was sensible of no impropriety in being our guest upon the occasion, his company would be very acceptable; our calculation was that he had less chance of gaining than losing by accepting the invitation. We knew the impression which the coincidence of circumstances would make upon a certain great personage, how readily that impression would be communicated to the proud and aspiring lords of the Ancient Dominion, and we have not been mistaken as to the jealousy we expected it would excite through the party.

Be assured, the apparition was much less frightful to those who saw it, than to many who heard of the place where it appeared. The toast was indiscreet, and extremely well calculated to answer our views. It will not be an easy task to impose upon the federalists here, united and communicative as they are at present; and you may rely, that no eagerness to recover lost power will betray them into any doctrines or compromises, repugnant or dangerous to their former principles. We shall probably pay more attention to public opinion than we have heretofore done, and take more pains, not merely to do right things, but to do them in an acceptable manner. I perfectly agree in opinion with you as to the propriety of the proposed amendments to the Constitution. They are recommended strongly by

both reason and experience. You have seen the patchwork offered to us as a new judicial system. The whole is designed to cover one object, which the party consider it necessary to accomplish—the postponement of the next session of the Supreme Court to February following. They mean to give to the repealing act its full effect, before the judges of the Supreme Court are allowed to assemble. Have you thought of the steps which our party ought to pursue on this subject? There will be a meeting to concert an uniform plan of acting or acquiescing before Congress adjourns, to be recommended in the manner which shall be thought advisable.

We beg your opinion. You know the value we set upon it, and the influence it will have on our determination.

A joint committee of the two houses have agreed upon Monday the 26th of the present month, as the day of adjournment.

Yours, &c.

HAMILTON TO BAYARD.

NEW-YORK, April, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 12th instant has relieved me from some apprehension. Yet it is well that it should be perfectly understood by the truly sound part of the federalists, that there do in fact exist intrigues in good earnest between several individuals not unimportant, of the federal party, and the person in question, which are bottomed upon motives and views by no means auspicious to the real welfare of the country. I am glad to find that it is in contemplation to adopt a plan of conduct. It is very necessary; and, to be useful, it must be efficient and comprehensive in the means which it embraces, at the same time that it must meditate none which are not really constitutional and patriotic. I will comply with your invitation by submitting some ideas which, from time to time, have passed through my mind. Nothing is more fallacious than to expect to produce any

valuable or permanent results in political projects, by relying merely on the reason of men. Men are rather reasoning than reasonable animals, for the most part governed by the impulse of passion. This is a truth well understood by our adversaries, who have practised upon it with no small benefit to their cause; for at the very moment they are eulogizing the reason of men, and professing to appeal only to that faculty, they are courting the strongest and most active passion of the human heart, *vanity!* It is no less true, that the federalists seem not to have attended to the fact sufficiently; and that they erred in relying so much on the rectitude and utility of their measures as to have neglected the cultivation of popular favor, by fair and justifiable expedients. The observation has been repeatedly made by me to individuals with whom I particularly conversed, and expedients suggested, for gaining good will, which were never adopted. Unluckily, however, for us, in the competition for the passions of the people, our opponents have great advantages over us; for the plain reason that the vicious are far more active than the good passions; and that, to win the latter to our side, we must renounce our principles and our objects, and unite in corrupting public opinion, till it becomes fit for nothing but mischief. Yet, unless we can contrive to take hold of, and carry along with us some strong feelings of the mind, we shall in vain calculate upon any substantial or durable results. Whatever plan we may adopt, to be successful, must be founded on the truth of this proposition. And perhaps it is not very easy for us to give it full effects; epecially not without some deviations from what, on other occasions, we have maintained to be right. But in determining upon the propriety of the deviations, we must consider whether it be possible for us to succeed, without, in some degree, employing the weapons which have been employed against us, and whether the actual state, and future prospect of things, be not such as to justify the reciprocal use of them. I need not tell you that I do not mean to countenance the imitation of things intrinsically unworthy, but only of such as may be denominated irregular; such as, in a sound and stable order of things, ought not to exist. Neither are you to infer that any revolutionary

result is contemplated. In my opinion, the present Constitution is the standard to which we are to cling. Under its banners, *bona fide*, must we combat our political foes, rejecting all changes but through the channel itself provides for amendments. By these general views of the subject, have my reflections been guided. I now offer you the outline of the plan which they have suggested. Let an association be formed to be denominated "The Christian Constitutional Society." Its objects to be,

1st. The support of the Christian religion.

2d. The support of the Constitution of the United States.

Its organization.

1st. A council, consisting of a president and twelve members, of whom four and the president to be a quorum.

2d. A sub-directing council in each State, consisting of a vice-president and twelve members, of whom four, with the vice-president, to be a quorum; and 3d, as many branches in each State as local circumstances may permit to be formed by the sub-directing council.

The meeting at Washington to nominate the president and vice, together with four members of each of the councils, who are to complete their own numbers respectively.

Its means.

1st. The diffusion of information. For this purpose not only the newspapers but pamphlets must be largely employed; and to do this a fund must be created; five dollars annually, for eight years, to be contributed by each member who can really afford it (taking care not to burthen the less able brethren), may afford a competent fund for a competent term. It is essential to be able to disseminate *gratis* useful publications. Wherever it can be done, and there is a press, clubs should be formed, to meet once a week, read the newspapers, and prepare essays, paragraphs, &c.

2d. The use of all lawful means in *concert* to promote the election of *fit* men; a lively correspondence must be kept up between the different societies.

3d. The promoting of institutions of a charitable and useful nature in the management of federalists. The populous cities ought particularly to be attended to; perhaps it would be well to institute in such places—1st, societies for the relief of emigrants; 2d, academies, each with one professor, for instructing the different classes of mechanics in the principles of mechanics and the elements of chemistry. The cities have been employed by the Jacobins to give an impulse to the country; and it is believed to be an alarming fact, that while the question of Presidential election was pending in the House of Representatives, parties were organizing in several of the cities in the event of there being no election, to cut off the leading federalists and seize the government.

The foregoing to be the principal engine, and in addition, let measures be adopted to bring as soon as possible the repeal of the Judiciary law before the Supreme Court; afterwards, if not before, let as many legislatures as can be prevailed upon, instruct their Senators to endeavor to procure a repeal of the repealing law. The body of New England, speaking the same language, will give a powerful impulse. In Congress our friends to *propose* little, to agree cordially to all good measures, and to resist and expose all bad. This is a general sketch of what has occurred to me. It is at the service of my friends for so much as it may be worth.

With true esteem and regard, dear Sir, yours, &c.

BAYARD TO HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON, 25th April, 1802.

DEAR SIR:

I have considered with a great deal of attention the project recommended in your last letter, of connected associations in the different States, for the support of our Constitution and religion. The plan is marked with great ingenuity, but I am not inclined to think that it is applicable to the state of things in this country. Such an association must be bottomed upon a stronger and

more active principle than reason, or even a sense of common interest, to render it successful. There is more material for such an association upon the other side than upon ours. We have the greater number of political calculators, and they of political fanatics.

An attempt at association, organized into clubs, on the part of the federalists, would revive at housand jealousies and suspicions which now begin to slumber.

Let us not be too impatient, and our adversaries will soon demonstrate to the world the soundness of our doctrines, and the imbecility and folly of their own. Without any exertion upon our part, in the course of two or three years they will render every honest man in the country our proselyte.

A degree of agitation and vibration of opinion must for ever prevail under a government so free as that of the United States. Under such a government, in the nature of things, it is impossible to fix public opinion. It is still left to the exertions of good men to prevent infinite evils, to which the country is exposed from the selfish and ambitious intrigues of demagogues.

The President's party in Congress is much weaker than you would be led to judge from the printed state of votes. Here we plainly discern that there is no confidence, nor the smallest attachment prevails among them.

The spirit which existed at the beginning of the session is entirely dissipated: a more rapid and radical change could not have been anticipated.

An occasion is only wanting for Virginia to find herself abandoned by all her auxiliaries, and she would be abandoned upon the ground of her inimical principles to an efficient federal government.

Upon the subject of the judiciary, I have had an opportunity of learning the opinions of the Chief Justice. He considers the late repealing act as operative in depriving the judges of all power derived under the act repealed.

The office still remains, which he holds to be a mere capacity, without a new appointment, to receive and exercise any new judicial powers which the legislature may confer. It has been

considered here as the most advisable course for the circuit courts to pursue, will be at the end of their ensuing session to adjourn generally, and to leave what remains to be done to the Supreme Court.

PINCKNEY TO HAMILTON.

CHARLESTON, May 3d, 1802.

DEAR SIR:

I was in Georgia when your favor of the 15th of March arrived in Charleston, and when I received it it was too late to set out for Washington, to be there at the time mentioned, even if I had been prepared for such a jaunt. I agree entirely with you in your sentiments of the act repealing the act of the last session for the better organization of the judiciary department; but it was natural to expect that persons who have been always hostile to the constitution, would, when they had power, endeavor to destroy a work whose adoption they opposed, and whose execution they have constantly counteracted. But I do not imagine they will stop here. They will proceed in their mad and wicked career, and the people's eyes will be opened. If you have been able to effect a meeting, I should be glad to hear of the result. I did not write to General Davie, as I knew he had lately met with a loss in his family, which would prevent his being with you, even if he had time.

Be so obliging as to acquaint the editor of the Herald that none of his South Carolina subscribers have received more than three parcels of papers from him. If he was regular in the transmitting of them, I am sure he would receive encouragement in this State; but the irregularity and negligence of the persons who put them up will occasion most of those who now subscribe to withdraw their names another year. From Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, I get the papers punctually. I am obliged

to you for making me acquainted with Prince Ruspole. I found him well informed. He sails for Europe to-morrow.

I am always your affectionate friend,

CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY.

HAMILTON TO KING.

NEW-YORK, June 3, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have been long very delinquent towards you as a correspondent; and am to thank you that you have not cast me off altogether as an irretrievable reprobate. But you know how to appreciate the causes, and you have made a construction equally just and indulgent.

In your last you ask my opinion about a matter delicate and important, both in a public and in a personal view. I shall give it with the frankness to which you have a right, and I may add that the impressions of your other friends, so far as they have fallen under my observation, do not differ from my own. While you were in the midst of a negotiation interesting to your country, it was your duty to keep your post. You have now accomplished the object, and with the good fortune, not very common, of having the universal plaudit. This done, it seems to me most advisable that you return home. There is little probability that your continuance in your present station will be productive of much positive good. Nor are circumstances such as to give reason to apprehend that the substitute for you, whoever he may be, can do much harm. Your stay or return, therefore, as it regards our transatlantic concerns, is probably not material, while your presence at home may be useful in ways which it is not necessary to particularize. Besides, it is questionable whether you can long continue in the service of the present administration, consistently with what is due as well to your own character as to the common cause. I am far from thinking that a

man is bound to quit a public office, merely because the administration of the government may have changed hands. But when those who have come into power are undisguised persecutors of the party to which he has been attached, and study with ostentation to heap upon it every indignity and injury—he ought not, in my opinion, to permit himself to be made an exception, or to lend his talents to the support of such characters. If, in addition to this, it be true that the principles and plans of the men at the head of affairs tend to the degradation of the government, and to their own disgrace, it will hardly be possible to be in any way connected with them without sharing in the disrepute which they may be destined to experience.

I wish I had time to give you a comprehensive and particular map of our political situation; but more than a rude outline is beyond my leisure, devoted as I am more than ever to my professional pursuits.

You have seen the course of the administration hitherto, especially during the last session of Congress; and I am persuaded you will agree with me in opinion, that it could hardly have been more diligent in mischief. What, you will ask, has been and is likely to be the effect on the public mind?

Our friends are sanguine that a great change for the better has been wrought and is progressive. I suppose good has been done—that the federalists have been reunited and cemented; have been awakened, alarmed. Perhaps, too, there may be some sensible and moderate men of the opposite party who are beginning to doubt. But I as yet discover no satisfactory symptoms of a revolution of opinion in the mass—"informe ingens cui lumen ademptum." Nor do I look with much expectation to any serious alteration until inconveniences are extensively felt, or until time has produced a disposition to coquet it with new lovers. Vibrations of power, you are aware, are of the genius of our government.

There is, however, a circumstance which may accelerate the fall of the present party. There is certainly a most serious schism between the chief and his heir-apparent; a schism absolutely incurable, because founded in the hearts of both, in the

rivalship of an insatiable and unprincipled ambition. The effects are already apparent, and are ripening into a more bitter animosity between the partisans of the two men, than ever existed between the federalists and anti-federalists.

Unluckily, we are not as neutral to this quarrel as we ought to be. You saw, however, how far our friends in Congress went in polluting themselves with the support of the second personage for the Presidency. The cabal did not terminate there. Several men of no inconsiderable importance among us like the enterprising and adventurous character of this man, and hope to soar with him to power. Many more, through hatred to the chief, and through an impatience to recover the reins, are linking themselves to the new chief almost without perceiving it, and professing to have no other object than to make use of him; while he knows that he is making use of them. What this may end in, it is difficult to perceive.

Of one thing only I am sure, that in no event will I be directly or indirectly implicated in a responsibility for the elevation or support of either of two men who, in different senses, are in my eyes equally unworthy of the confidence of intelligent or honest men.

Truly, my dear sir, the prospects of our country are not brilliant. The mass is far from sound. At head quarters a most visionary theory presides. Depend upon it, this is the fact to a great extreme. No army, no navy, no *active* commerce; national defence, not by arms, but by embargoes, prohibitions of trade, &c.; as little government as possible within; these are the pernicious dreams which, as far and as fast as possible, will be attempted to be realized. Mr. Jefferson is distressed at the codfish having latterly emigrated to the southern coast, lest the people there should be tempted to catch them, and commerce, of which we have already too much, receive an accession. Be assured this is no pleasantry, but a very sober anecdote.

Among federalists old errors are not cured. They also continue to dream, though not quite so preposterously as their opponents. All will be very well (say they) when the power once gets back into federal hands. The people, convinced by experi-

ence of their error, will repose a permanent confidence in good men. Risum teneatis? Adieu.

Yours ever,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO WOLCOTT.

GRANGE, August 14, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

When you were last in town, I proposed to communicate to you the outline of a project, by which I think you may enter upon a career of business beneficial to yourself and friends. My almost constant attendance at court ever since you were here, has retarded the communication which I shall now make.

Let a commercial capital be found, to consist of 100,000 dollars, divided into shares of $100 each. A subscriber to pay in cash *one-tenth* of his subscription, and for the residue 7 per centum per annum. It will then be his interest to pay up as soon as he can.

The subscribers to form a partnership, under the firm of Oliver Wolcott & Co.; Oliver Wolcott alone to have the signature of the firm, and the active management of the affairs of the company, with an allowance of $1500 per annum out of the profits for the trouble of management, besides his share of profits as a partner.

Oliver Wolcott and two others of the partners to form a board of direction, to plan, &c.

Clerks and all incidental expenses to be paid out of the fund.

The objects of the company.

1. Agencies for purchase and sales of lands, stocks, &c.

2. Factorage of cargoes, consigned on commission; purchases of goods on commission, &c.; in brief, "the business of a commission merchant merely."

3. Purchases at auction, and sales of the articles purchased.

4. Loans of money on deposit of goods, with a right, if not redeemed in time, to sell on commission, perhaps.

Speculative enterprises in navigation and commerce to be excluded.

In a company thus formed under your management, I should be willing to become a partner for from 5 to 10,000 dollars, and I have no doubt that the capital will be readily formed of confidential and trust-worthy characters, who would insure great credit to the house. I am also confident, that when it should be known in Europe that certain characters were of the company, it would attract a good portion of profitable employment.

I will enter into no farther detail. If the project impresses you favorably, come to New-York, and we will give it form, and finish and prepare for the execution. Do not lightly reject it.

Yours, very truly, &c.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

GRANGE, September 4th, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

I fully intended to have dined with you to-day, but, going to town the two last days, and forgetting that I ought to observe a regimen, I have brought back, in some degree, the complaint which lately annoyed me, and which requires to be well watched. This must deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you.

I send schedules of the papers required of Tillier, all which have been put into my hands; the bills to remain till the close of the affair; the other documents to be delivered to your order.

I also send a draught of the trust deed. It endeavors to comply with your suggestion, as far as can be done without running foul of the danger desired to be avoided.

Your guests are invited to dine with us Thursday next. Will you make one?

HAMILTON TO GEN. C. C. PINCKNEY.

GRANGE (New-York), Dec. 29, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

A garden, you know, is a very usual refuge of a disappointed politician. Accordingly, I have purchased a few acres about nine miles from town, have built a house, and am cultivating a garden. The *melons* in your country are very fine. Will you have the goodness to send me some seed, both of the water and musk melons? My daughter adds another request, which is for three or four of your paroquets. She is very fond of birds. If there be any thing in this quarter, the sending of which can give you pleasure, you have only to name them. As *farmers*, a new source of sympathy has arisen between us, and I am pleased with every thing in which our likings and tastes can be approximated. Amidst the triumphant reign of democracy, do you retain sufficient interest in public affairs to feel any curiosity about what is going on? In my opinion, the follies and vices of the administration have as yet made no material impression to their disadvantage. On the contrary, I think the malady is rather progressive than upon the decline, in our northern quarter. The last *lullaby* message, instead of inspiring contempt, attracts praise. Mankind are for ever destined to be the dupes of bold or cunning imposture. But a difficult knot has been twisted by the incidents of the cession of Louisiana, and the interruption of the deposit of New Orleans. You have seen the soft turn given to this in the message. Yet we are told that the President, in conversation, is very stout. The great embarrassment must be how to carry on the war without taxes. The pretty scheme of substituting economy to taxation will not do here. And a war would be a terrible comment upon the abandonment of the internal revenue. Yet how is popularity to be preserved with the western partisans, if their interests are tamely sacrificed? Will the artifice be for the chief to hold a bold language, and the subalterns to act a feeble part? Time must explain. You know my general theory as to our western affairs.

I have always held that the *unity of our Empire*, and the best interests of our nation, require that we shall annex to the United States all the territory east of the Mississippi, New Orleans included. Of course I infer that, on an emergency like the present, energy is wisdom.

Adieu, my dear Sir.

Ever yours, &c.

Mrs. Hamilton joins me in affectionate compliments to Mrs. Pinckney.

SEDGWICK TO HAMILTON.

STOCKBRIDGE, January 27th, 1803.

DEAR SIR:

This will be handed to you by a Mr. Thomas Fitch, and at his desire is addressed to his care. He wishes for the honor of being known to you, and he hopes for the aid of your patronage in the pursuit of some object of which I have no distinct knowledge. He is of an obscure, though reputable family in this neighborhood. The President of the College where he was educated, a good and respectable man, has spoken to me of his talents and acquirements in terms above the degree which could be expressed by the epithet *decent*, and of his moral character as perfectly pure.

I regret exceedingly that I had not the pleasure to see you here last autumn. There is not a man on earth, whose company would have given me more pleasure. Of this enough, because you know the fact to be so without my affirmation.

What think you of democracy? Will it not progress successfully until its evils are felt? For myself, I have no doubt that it will. Even in this State, great sacrifices are made to popular passions and prejudices, and they are deemed necessary to retain the powers of our government in federal hands. There is one consolation under all the humiliation which we endure from a sense of the degradation of our national character. This

state of things cannot long exist. The disorganization which is the inevitable effect of the enfeebling policy of democracy will produce such intolerable evils as will necessarily destroy their cause. All that good and enlightened men can hope is to be in such a state as that their talents and experience at that period may be applied to the public benefit. For that purpose, union of conduct and sympathy of sentiment ought now to be cultivated. This is of the utmost importance, that the conduct of certain men should be constantly regulated by these important considerations. Hence it was I was pleased with the idea which you suggested, when I first had the pleasure of seeing you, of a confidential meeting, and I have very much regretted that it did not take place.

It is very important that the federalists should retain and acquire the possession of the State governments wherever in their power. For this reason, and indeed for many others, I am glad Mr. King is about to return home. With wisdom and prudence, I think it is probable that he may be placed at the head of the government of New-York. He may there do infinitely more good than in the inefficient office of Vice-President. General Pinckney must in all events be considered as our candidate for the first office. I have been inexpressibly disgusted with some of our friends who have suggested that we ought to consider him only as designed for the second. There is, however, another consideration on the subject which ought to be considered as conclusive. We shall most certainly not succeed at the next election, nor is it, in my mind, desirable that we should. Should Mr. King be holden up for this office, it would lessen at least the probability of his success for the government of New-York.

There seems to me an inexcusable indolence or a want of ability among our friends at Washington. The public interest has been shamefully neglected, or profligately sacrificed in the affairs of Louisiana, the compromise with Georgia, and in the attempt made to break down our system of navigation. These subjects either are not understood, or there is a criminal inattention to them.

Next week I go to Boston, where I wish you would have the goodness to address a letter to me. Present my sincere regards to Mrs. Hamilton, and believe me, as I truly am, your friend.

PINCKNEY TO HAMILTON.

CHARLESTON, March 6th, 1803.

MY DEAR SIR:

I wrote you a few lines yesterday, and sent you some water-melon seeds and musk-melon seeds by the brig Charleston Packet, which sails this morning. I formerly sent some to Mrs. Washington, at Mount Vernon, but she told me they did not answer so well as some she got in the neighborhood; perhaps had she planted the seeds from the melons which were produced from the Carolina seed the subsequent year, they would have adapted themselves to the climate and produced good fruit. It was by this means we obtained our fine cotton, which has been of such advantage to our State. The first year it produced but three or four pods; by planting the seed of these pods the second year, they produced thirty; and by following the same method, the third year they were thoroughly naturalized, and bore from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pods. I will also send you by the Industry a few seeds of the salvia cocinea, or scarlet sage, which I believe you have not with you, and of the erythrina herbacea, or coral shrub; also a few seeds of the Indian creeper, and some of a beautiful purple convolvulus.

I will endeavor to obtain some paroquets for Miss Hamilton. I have not seen any for some years; ours are the large kind, by no means equal in beauty to the small African species.

Does there not appear to be a great want of nerve and energy in the measures our rulers are adopting? They are not calculated to avoid war, and we shall have to encounter it in a shameful state of unpreparedness. Yet such is the infatuation

of the people, that anti-federalism certainly gains ground in this State, which can only exist by a strong union and firm government.

LA FAYETTE TO HAMILTON.

PARIS, Germinal the 10th, 11th year.

MY DEAR HAMILTON:

I would like by this opportunity to write you a long letter, but having been lying on my back for two months past, and being three weeks to come doomed to the same situation, I must confine myself to a few lines written near my bed. The particulars of the accident, and his cure, will be given to you by General Bernadotte, whom I must particularly introduce, and his lady, to Mrs. Hamilton and you. Politics I will not dwell upon. My sentiments are so well known to you, that it were superfluous to say what I think of Senatus-Consulta at home, and settling colonies in North America; yet I hope this late affair may still be arranged to mutual satisfaction, and I am sure nobody could have better personal dispositions than my friend General Bernadotte, who, to those high and brilliant abilities which have so much contributed to the triumph of the French arms, joins one of the most civic, generous, and candid hearts it is possible to meet with. I know he sets a great value by the approbation of the citizens of America, and is particularly desirous of your acquaintance, and properly sensible of its advantages. I have seen in the papers a letter from you relative to the transactions at our York Town redoubt, in which I have found my friend Hamilton's whole character, and the more pleased I have been to receive it; as the attack had been some time known to me, but on the proposal of some friends to write to you, I had answered, you were on the spot, and would know better what was best for me to be done. Adieu, my dear friend; my best respects to Mrs. Hamilton. Remember me to our friends. I know

you are most friendly interested in my private concerns, and have ever depended upon it.

Most affectionately I am your constant friend,

LA FAYETTE.

WALSTERSTORFF TO HAMILTON.

ST. CROIX, April 20th, 1803.

DEAR GENERAL:

When I received your favor of the 5th August, I certainly did not think I should postpone so long answering it, and returning you my thanks for this proof of your kind remembrance. I shall offer you no apology for it, because there is none that would be satisfactory to myself. I beg you only to be assured, dear general, that there is not a character in America for whom I feel a greater regard and respect than that of General Hamilton, whose talents will no doubt soon again be called into action to the honor and advantage of his country. * * *

You would oblige me very much by sending our friend, Dr. Stevens, a copy of Camillus' letters, and of your later productions; the only copy of Camillus' letters which I had, I once lent to the late Count Bernstorff, who begged of me to let him keep it in his library *as a Classical work*—these were his expressions.

Accept my sincerest wishes for your happiness and that of your family, and believe me to be, with the greatest regard and the sincerest attachment, &c.

HAMILTON TO PICKERING.

NEW-YORK, Sept. 18th, 1803.

MY DEAR SIR:

I will make no apology for my delay in answering your inquiry, some time since made, because I could offer none which

would satisfy myself. I pray you only to believe that it proceeded from any thing rather than want of respect or regard. I shall now comply with your request. The highest toned propositions which I made in the convention, were for a President, Senate, and Judges, during good behavior—a House of Representatives for three years. Though I would have enlarged the legislative power of the general government, yet I never contemplated the abolition of the State governments; but, on the contrary, they were, in some particulars, constituent parts of my plan. This plan was, in my conception, conformable with the strict theory of a government purely republican; the essential criteria of which are, that the principal organs of the executive and legislative departments be elected by the people, and hold their offices by a *responsible* and temporary or *defeasible* tenure. A vote was taken on the proposition respecting the Executive. Five States were in favor of it; among these, Virginia; and though, from the manner of voting by delegations, individuals were not distinguished, it was morally certain, from the known situation of the Virginia members (six in number, two of them, *Mason* and *Randolph*, professing popular doctrines), that *Madison* must have concurred in the vote of Virginia—thus, if I sinned against *republicanism*, Mr. Madison was not less guilty. I may truly, then, say, that I never proposed either a President or Senate for life, and that I neither recommended nor meditated the annihilation of the State governments. And I may add, that in the course of the discussions in the convention, neither the propositions thrown out for debate, nor even those voted, in the earlier stages of the deliberation, were considered as evidences of a definitive opinion in the proposer or voter. It appeared to me to be in some sort understood, that with a view to free investigation, experimental propositions might be made, which were to be received merely as suggestions for consideration. Accordingly, it is a fact, that my final opinion was against an Executive during good behavior, on account of the increased danger to the public tranquillity incident to the election of a magistrate of this degree of permanency. In the plan of a constitution which I drew up while the convention was sitting, and which I communicated to Mr. Madison about the

close of it, perhaps a day or two after, the office of President has no greater duration than for three years. This plan was predicated upon these bases:—1. That the political principles of the people of this country would endure nothing but republican government. 2. That in the actual situation of the country, it was in itself right and proper that the republican theory should have a fair and full trial. 3. That to such a trial it was essential, that the government should be so constructed as to give all the energy and stability reconcilable with the principles of that theory.

These were the genuine sentiments of my heart, and upon them I acted. I sincerely hope that it may not hereafter be discovered, that, through want of sufficient attention to the last idea, the experiment of republican government, even in this country, has not been as complete, as satisfactory, and as decisive as could be wished.

Very truly, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

PICKERING TO HAMILTON.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, October 18, 1803.

DEAR SIR:

I hoped to have seen you on my way hither; but the distance at which you were from the place of crossing the Hudson, and my engagements with my travelling companions, prevented.

I duly received your letter of September 16th, relative to the propositions you made in the general convention. It was obvious that those, with the propositions of others, were presented for consideration and discussion, to be adopted and rejected as a sense of the public safety should require, and by no means as the definitive opinions of the movers.

Dining in company with General Pinckney, as he passed through Salem, in September, I was asked by one of the guests some questions concerning the nature of the propositions you made in the general convention. I referred the inquirer to the

general, who was a member. He answered, that you proposed that the governors of the several States should be appointed by the President of the United States, but that Mr. Madison moved, and was seconded by his cousin Charles Pinckney, that all the laws of the individual States should be subject to the negative of the chief executive of the United States. The general added, that he did not know which would be deemed the strongest measure.

You will see in the newspapers the President's message, but perhaps you may wish to have it in a more convenient form, and I inclose it. If you desire to possess similar documents, which shall be published in the course of the session, have the goodness to let me know it; and as any correspondence between us will be liable to suspicions, be pleased to inform me how I shall make any communications to you.

HAMILTON TO KING.

ALBANY, Feb. 24th, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR:

You will have heard before this reaches you of the fluctuations and changes which have taken place in the measures of the reigning party, as to a candidate for Governor; and you will probably have also been informed that, pursuant to the opinions professed by our friends, before I left New-York I had taken an active part in favor of Mr. Lansing.

It is a fact to be regretted, though anticipated, that the federalists very extensively had embarked with zeal in the support of Mr. Burr; yet an impression to the contrary, and in favor of Mr. Lansing, had been made, and there was good ground to hope that a proper direction in the main might have been given to the current of federalism. The substitution of Mr. Lewis has essentially varied the prospect, and the best informed among us here agree that the federalists, as a body, could not be diverted from

Mr. Burr to Mr. Lewis, by any efforts of leading characters, if they should even deem the support of the latter expedient.

Though I have no reason to think that my original calculation was wrong, while the competition was between Clinton and Burr, yet from the moment the former declined, I began to consider the latter as having a chance of success. It was still, however, my reliance that *Lansing* would outrun him; but now that Chief Justice Lewis is the competitor, the probability in my judgment inclines to Mr. Burr.

Thus situated, two questions have arisen; first, whether a federal candidate ought not to be run, as a means of supporting Mr. Burr, and of keeping the federalists from becoming a personal faction allied to him. Second, whether, in the conflict of parties as they now stand, the strongest of them disconcerted and disjointed, there would not be a considerable hope of success for a federal candidate.

These questions have received no solution in scarcely any one's mind; but it is agreed that, if an attempt is to be made, you must be the candidate. There is no other man among us under whose standard either fragment of the democratic party could as easily rally. It is enough to say, you have been absent during the time in which party animosities have become matured and fixed, and, therefore, are much less than any other distinguished federalist, an object of them.

To detach the federalists from Burr, they must believe *two* things: *one*, that we are in earnest as to our candidate, and that it is not a mere diversion; the other, that there is some chance of success. All believe, and some leading candidates admit, that if either of the two democratic rival parties should come to expect a defeat, they will range themselves under your banner.

Reflect well on all these things, and make up your mind in case you should be invited to consent. I have not time to enlarge.

Yours very truly, &c,

HAMILTON TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

ALBANY, February 27, 1804.

SIR:

It is now a long time since a very odious slander has been in circulation to the prejudice of my character.

It has come to my ears in more than one way, but always, till lately, without the disclosure of any source to which I could resort for explanation or detection. Within a few days, Mr. Kane, of this city, related to me a story as coming from Judge Purdy, in substance very similar to the calumny to which I have alluded. The amount of his information, and the result of an interview with Judge Purdy, are contained in the inclosed paper. You will observe, sir, that your name is implicated in the transaction. With what warrant, it would be improper for me to prejudge. But the very mention of your name adds importance to the affair, and increases the motives to investigation.

The charge, even in the mitigated form to which it is reduced by Judge Purdy's admission, is of a nature too derogatory to permit me to pass it lightly over. It is essential that its origin and progress should be traced as fully as may be practicable, in order to the thorough exposure of its falsehood and malignity.

The assertions of Judge Purdy authorize me to appeal to you for a frank and candid explanation of so much of the matter as relates to yourself. This explanation I request as speedily as may be.

CLINTON TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, 29th Feb., 1804.

SIR:

This is the first moment's leisure I have had to answer your letter of the 27th inst., which was handed to me yesterday. I have carefully perused the paper it inclosed, under the signature

of Mr. James Kane, and find the statement of the transaction alluded to, as admitted by Judge Purdy, to be correct as far as my name is implicated; and I believe it contains, as reduced by Judge Purdy, the substance of all the conversations that passed between him and me on that subject. I recollect to have mentioned to him that I had seen the copy of a letter similar to the one mentioned in the statement on or about the time the convention, which formed our federal constitution, was sitting. This copy was put into my hands by the late General Malcolm, who informed me he had received it from Connecticut. It was without signature or direction.

I have the honor to be,
Your most obedient servant,
GEO. CLINTON.

HAMILTON TO CLINTON.

ALBANY, March 2, 1804.

SIR:

If our correspondence does not terminate with your letter of the 29th February, received yesterday, I wish it to be understood that it proceeds merely from the desire of removing all ambiguity from a transaction in which my character may be materially interested.

It is perhaps the natural inference from what you have stated, that nothing took place on your part to sanction or corroborate the story related to you by Judge Purdy, in reference to any agency or co-operation of mine in the supposed project. Yet some of the circumstances are such, that a different inference might possibly be drawn.

I therefore trust that you will be sensible of the propriety of dissipating all obscurity on this point.

If the letter, which you mention to have been put into your hands by General Malcolm, was not withdrawn by him, or if any copy was retained by you, it would be satisfactory to me to

have an inspectionof the one or the other, with leave to take a copy, in order that I may have an additional clue to the source of a story, which I verily believe originated entirely in a fabrication.

I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's obedient servant, &c.

CLINTON TO HAMILTON.

ALBANY, March 6th, 1804.

SIR:

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 2d instant. I cannot conceive it possible that inferences can be drawn from any circumstance attending the transaction alluded to, repugnant to the explicit declarations in my letter to you of the 29th of last month, without calling in question the truth of them, and this I trust will not be attempted. It was not to be expected that I could recollect, so as to repeat the precise words used in the conversation which Judge Purdy had with me, nor is it essential to your inquiries, as they would throw no light on the subject.

With respect to the copy of the letter put into my hands by General Malcolm, it is a circumstance of so old a date, that I dare not venture positively to assert that I returned it to him; but I believe I did; and what serves to confirm me in this opinion, is my not being able to find it amongst my papers. The contents of it, however, were so interesting, as to make a strong and durable impression on my mind. It recommended a government for the United States similar to that of Great Britain, and to obviate the difficulties which might attend fixing on a suitable character for a king, and to form an intimate connection with that country, the prince, Bishop of Osnaburgh, was proposed. The House of Lords was to be composed partly of the British hereditary nobility, and partly of such of our own citizens as should have most merit in bringing about the measure. The House of Commons to be elected by the people. In considera-

tion of this provision for one of the British royal family, Canada was to be ceded to the United States, with a certain portion of the British navy, and a perpetual treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, entered into between the two countries. The letter was well written, and interspersed with much plausible reasoning, which I do not fully recollect, calculated to obviate any objections that might be raised against the measures it proposed, and to show the advantages which would result from them.

The charge of having countenanced an attempt to establish a monarchical government, however modified, in the United States, I consider odious and disreputable, and I am pleased to find that, however much we may differ on other political subjects, we agree in sentiment as to this; and you may rest assured, that should the copy of the letter alluded to be found amongst my papers, or otherwise acquired by me, you shall have a copy of it, with an opportunity of examining the original.

I am your most obedient servant.

HAMILTON TO CLINTON.

ALBANY, March 7th, 1804.

SIR:

On Saturday last I sent you a letter, of which the foregoing is a copy, to which, as yet, I have received no reply.

Intending to leave this place for New-York on Saturday next, it is important that I should receive an answer before that day.

I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's obedient servant, &c.

HAMILTON TO CLINTON.

ALBANY, March 9, 1804.

SIR:

I had the honor of receiving yesterday, your excellency's letter of the 6th instant. It is agreeable to me to find in it a confirmation of the inference that you had given no countenance to the supposition of my agency or co-operation in the project to which the story of Judge Purdy relates; and it only remains for me to regret, that it is not in your power to furnish the additional clue of which I was desirous, to aid me in tracing the fabrication to its source.

I shall not only rely on the assurance which you give as to the future communication of the copy of the letter in question, should it hereafter come to your hands, but I will take the liberty to add a request, that you will be pleased to make known to me any other circumstances, if any should reach you, which may serve to throw light upon the affair. I feel an anxiety that it should be thoroughly sifted, not merely on my own account, but from a conviction that the pretended existence of such a project, long travelling about in whispers, has had no inconsiderable influence in exciting false alarms, and unjust suspicions, to the prejudice of a number of individuals, every way worthy of public confidence, who have always faithfully supported the existing institutions of the country, and who would disdain to be concerned in an intrigue with any foreign power, or its agents, either for introducing monarchy, or for promoting or upholding any other scheme of government within the United States.

I have the honor to be, &c.

HAMILTON TO TALLEYRAND.

NEW-YORK, March 25, 1804.

SIR:

Presuming on the acquaintance, from which I derived much pleasure during your stay in this country, I am going to take a very great liberty. It concerns a near relation of mine, Mr. Alexander Hamilton, now a prisoner of war on parole at Paris.

His brother, from whom I have just received a letter, informs me that being on a visit to the continent, as a traveller, he was overtaken by the war between France and Great Britain, and has been since that time in the situation which I have mentioned. He is a Scotch gentleman of education and literary acquirement, who, having amassed a pretty handsome fortune in the East Indies, had returned to his own country to devote himself to the pursuits of knowledge, and was induced to pass over to the continent to indulge his curiosity, with a particular eye to the very interesting monuments of the arts, of which Paris is now the depository.

I will ask nothing specific for him, because I know not what could with propriety be done, contenting myself with merely saying, that if your interposition can procure for him any facility, indulgence, or favor, it will confer a personal obligation on one who has the honor to

Remain, with great respect.

HAMILTON TO ——

NEW-YORK, April 13th, 1804.

DEAR SIR:

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you, and another from Mr. ——. I have no doubt but that the latter would serve you if he could, but he cannot at this time. On the whole, I

would advise you to return to New-York, and accept any respectable employment in your way, till an opportunity of something better shall occur. 'Tis by patience and perseverance that we can vanquish difficulties, and better our unpleasant condition.

Arraign not the dispensations of Providence. They must be founded in wisdom and goodness, and when they do not suit us, it must be because there is some fault in ourselves which deserves chastisement, or because there is a kind intent to correct us in some vice or failing, of which perhaps we may not be conscious, or because the general plan requires that we should suffer partial ill.

In this situation it is our duty to cultivate resignation, and even humility, bearing in mind, in the language of the poet, that it was "pride which lost the blest abodes."

With esteem and regard, &c.

HAMILTON TO STUYVESANT.

June 26, 1804.

DEAR SIR:

I should like to see you on the subject of a poor fellow, Peter Drinker, who says you have been employed for him, and appears unfortunate, which is his title to my attention.

Yours truly.

HAMILTON TO SEDGWICK.

NEW-YORK, July 10, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received two letters from you since we last saw each other; that of the latest date being the 24th of May. I have had on hand for some time a long letter to you, explaining my view

of the course and tendency of our politics, and my intentions as to my own future conduct. But my plan embraced so large a range, that owing to much avocation, some indifferent health, and a growing distaste to politics, the letter is still considerably short of being finished. I write this now to satisfy you that want of regard for you has not been the cause of my silence.

I will here express but one sentiment, which is, that dismemberment of our empire will be a clear sacrifice of great positive advantages without any counterbalancing good, administering no relief to our real disease, which is *democracy*, the poison of which by a subdivision will only be the more concentrated in each part, and consequently the more virulent. King is on his way for Boston, where you may chance to see him, and hear from himself his sentiments.

God bless you.

A. H.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, ROBERT LIVINGSTON, AND ——— ALLISON, ESQRS.

1777.*

GENTLEMEN:

With cheerfulness I embrace the proposal of corresponding with your convention through you, and shall from time to time, as far as my leisure will permit, and my duty warrant, just communicate transactions as shall happen, such pieces of intelligence as shall be received, and such comments upon them as shall appear necessary to convey a true idea of what is going on in the military line. Let me caution you, however, that whatever opinions I shall give in the course of our correspondence, are to be considered merely as my private sentiments, and are never to

* For these letters, written in 1777, the Editor is indebted to the kindness of Bishop Potter. They did not come into his possession until after the first volume was in print.

be interpreted as an echo of those of the *General;* since they will not be really so, and a construction of the kind may lead into errors and be productive of inconveniences.

The present season affords nothing of importance. There are daily little skirmishes, arising from attempts of the enemy to forage; but which, though generally favorable to us, are attended with consequences so trifling and insignificant as to be scarcely worth mentioning. They are, indeed, of great service in the general scale, as they serve to harass and distress the enemy, and by keeping them from forage, will put them under difficulties as to the transportation of their baggage and cannon, whenever they shall think of making any capital movement. One thing worthy of notice is, that hardly a day passes without some deserter coming in. The fact itself, and the accounts they concurrently give, prove that the spirit of desertion runs high; and the reason assigned for it is, that many of the regiments have been a very long time without pay, and that the men are most barbarously treated if they only dare to lisp their discontent on the score of it.

'Tis rumored that the Congress have received a letter from Dr. Franklin, by which he seems to be in such high spirits as to prognosticate a favorable disposition of affairs in the quarter where he is. I was just now also transiently told that he had been received in the public character of a plenipotentiary from the American States. When it receives confirmation, I will give it to you.

I shall observe your directions respecting a transference of the company lately mine to the continental establishment, and in my next shall communicate the result of my inquiry into the present state of your cannon. The General is now perfectly recovered, and, added to the pleasure of returning health, enjoys the solace of his lady's company, who has lately joined the army.

I am, with much respect, gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS, ETC.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, 2d March, 1777.

GENTLEMEN:

Two days ago I accepted your challenge, and met you for the first time in the epistolary field; since which I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 19th instant, and, as far as circumstances will permit, close with your proposal of interchanging blows twice a week.

The present time is so unfruitful of events, that it affords no intelligence worth your notice. As to transactions of a military nature, I can only say, that the British army continues to decrease by the daily loss of prisoners and deserters taken at and coming into the different posts, which is a striking symptom that the situation of affairs with the enemy is not so favorable as it might be; for when an army is in good humor, and its affairs prosperous, desertion is a disease that seldom prevails in it.

From all the accounts they have given us, seconded by considerations that obviously present themselves, it is my opinion the enemy will make no grand movement before the beginning of May, and perhaps not then. There is no expectation in their army of their being speedily called to the field, nor the least disposition of matters that I have heard of for a sudden excursion. It will be a long time before the roads will be fit for the transportation of artillery, which is an essential instrument in their operations; and a still longer before the ground will admit of an encampment consistent with the health and comfort of the soldiers; and it would defeat their purpose to undertake any thing of importance under circumstances that would oblige them to divide their army in order to accommodate it. It seems also to be an opinion supported by the best reasons, that the main object with which they will open the campaign will be the capture of Philadelphia. If so, they will have a greater probability of success by co-operating both by sea and land; and the preparations for this, added to the dangers of making an attempt by water at too early a season, will in all likelihood protract the execution of their project at least till the time I have mentioned.

I intimated that it might perhaps be later before they would move. It seems to me a pretty general idea in their army, that they will wait for reinforcements before they take the field. Should they do this, I see not from what quarter they can expect any succors worth mentioning, so early as the beginning of May. But I would lay no great stress upon this. Notwithstanding the idea is countenanced by their weakness in numbers, which must make their success more doubtful, and expose them to greater hazard in whatever they attempt than can be agreeable, where so much is at stake, much will depend, however, upon the comparative strength of our army, and the conception they may form of it.

Though I do not doubt your discretion, which occasioned me so readily to embrace your proposal, yet such is the delicacy of my situation, that I must beg leave to repeat what I before observed to you, that whenever I give opinions they are merely my own, and will probably, so far from being a transcript of those of the General, differ widely from them in many respects. The one I now advance is of this kind, and is besides improper to be generally circulated; for many people who have the management of affairs are of so lethargic a complexion that they are to be kept in action only by the fear of immediate danger—and should they get it into their heads that the enemy would remain idle for six weeks, would think they had a right to doze away forty days at least.

In my last, I mentioned a rumor concerning Doctor Franklin; since that I have seen something said (and I believe it) to be an extract of a letter from him to Mr. Bache, of Philadelphia, in which he represents things to be in an excellent train in France, and uses this strong emphatical language, that a war between her and Britain "was as inevitable as death." No public advices from him that I know of, have reached Head-Quarters.

I spoke to General Knox about your cannon in the continental service. He answered that it would be difficult to ascertain to what particular class the pieces that had been left belonged; but he considered the continent at all times bound

to make good the number borrowed from your State; and that he had still your six pieces in his hands. I have always looked upon the matter in the same light.

I have the honor to be,
Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS, ETC.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, April 12th, 1777.

GENTLEMEN:

I this day have received your favor of the 8th instant. Hurry of business prevents my entering into a particular detail of affairs, either with respect to the enemy or ourselves, though matters remain much in the same situation as when I last wrote. The enemy are unquestionably preparing to take the field as soon as possible, notwithstanding which, I believe it may be full as late as I at first suggested before they will be perfectly ready for a general movement. By several persons who have come out of New-York within these few days, it is pretty well confirmed that they have constructed a bridge to be laid upon boats, for the purpose, in all probability, of crossing the Delaware.

The new levies begin to come in from the southward, but not in such large numbers as could be wished. It is to be hoped, however, that we shall shortly be sufficiently reinforced to give an effectual obstruction to their designs. The Congress have resolved, if the General approves, to form a camp on the west side of the Delaware, and have called upon Pennsylvania to furnish 3000 militia to join the same. Every nerve must and will be strained to prevent Philadelphia falling into the enemy's hands. It is a place of infinite importance.

It is said there are favorable accounts lately received from Doctor Franklin; but we have no authentic advice of the kind, nor does the report extend to any particulars.

Your sentiments of Major Edmonston's conduct correspond with the General's ideas of it. He had given some directions to General Schuyler on the subject. Besides other purposes it might serve, the design of his going to Canada was evidently that he might be a vehicle of instructions to General Carleton. It would be the most convenient, certain, and expeditious mode they could have fallen upon to convey them. I communicated the paragraph of your letter respecting him to his Excellency. He wishes the major might be sent on directly to Philadelphia. I fancy he would be glad to be saved the trouble of an interview with him.

I should be obliged to you to inform the convention, that it is my opinion the General will not permit Mr. Leroy to go into New-York. It is a determined point with him to grant no such indulgence when any matter of the kind is referred to him, unless the person applying can assign the most substantial reasons for his request, and can also produce explicit credentials of his political principles and conduct being favorable to the American cause. I conclude from my being instructed to require his parole, that he cannot give satisfaction on these points. If, however, he should obtain permission, I will execute the resolve transmitted to me. For the future, if the convention have cogent reasons for allowing any subject of the State to go in to the enemy, as they are the best judges of all the circumstances concerning him, they had better send him in without referring the matter particularly to the General.

I take the liberty to inclose a letter to the care of Mr. Jay; the delivery of which to him will be a favor conferred on,

Gentlemen,

Your most respectful servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS, LIVINGSTON, AND ALLISON, COMMITTEE OF THE NEW-YORK CONVENTION.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, April 20th, 1777.

GENTLEMEN:

The disposition of the convention, with respect to the disaffected among you, is highly commendable, and justified by every principle of equity and policy. The necessity of exemplary punishment throughout the States, is become evident beyond a doubt, and it were to be wished every one of the thirteen would imitate the judicious conduct of New-York. Lenity and forbearance have been tried too long to no purpose: it is high time to discard what the clearest experience has shown to be ineffectual.

But in dispensing punishment, the utmost care and caution ought to be used. The power of doing it, or even of bringing the guilty to trial, should be placed in hands that know well how to use it. I believe it would be a prudent rule to meddle with none but those whose crimes are supported by very sufficient evidence, and are of a pretty deep die. The apprehending innocent persons, or those whose offences are of so slender a nature as to make it prudent to dismiss them, furnishes an occasion of triumph, and a foundation for a species of animadversion which is very injurious to the public cause. Persons so apprehended generally return home worse than they were, and by expatiating on their sufferings, first excite the pity towards themselves, and afterwards the abhorrence towards their persecutors, of those with whom they converse. I believe it would also be in general a good rule, either to pardon offenders entirely, or to inflict capital and severe punishments. The advice given by a certain general to his son, when the latter had the Roman army in his power, was certainly very politic: he advised him either to destroy them utterly, or to dismiss them with every mark of honor and respect. By the first method, says he, you disable the Romans from being your enemies; by the last, you make them your friends. So with respect to the tories; I would either disable them from doing us

any injury, or I would endeavor to gain their friendship by clemency. Inflicting trifling punishments only embitters the minds of those on whom they fall, and increases their disposition to do mischief without taking away the power of doing it.

I shall communicate your additional resolve to the General, and consult him on what you mention, and shall let you know his opinion in my next: mine, however, is, that those who appear to be of such a character as to be susceptible of reformation, should be employed; but it is a delicate point.

As to news, the most material is, that from intelligence received from Rhode Island, it appears the enemy are abandoning it. This is a preparatory step to the intended operations of the enemy.

The other day we surprised a lieutenant's guard, took sixteen prisoners, and killed three or four.

In a private letter from Philadelphia, I am informed that a treaty of a very particular nature is on the point of being concluded between the Court of France and the States of America. There is a prospect of opening a trade with Sweden. I hear Mr. Morris, of Philadelphia, has a vessel arrived from thence.

I am in haste,
Gentlemen,
Your most respectful servant,
A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO THE HONORABLE COMMITTEE OF CONVENTION FOR THE STATE OF NEW-YORK.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, April 28th, 1777.

GENTLEMEN:

Extreme hurry of business puts it out of my power to say but very little.

Your information concerning a piece of ordnance lately constructed at Philadelphia, is true. There is such a piece at head-

quarters, weighs 227 pounds, carries a three-pound ball. The iron is wrought, hooped and welded together. The General and others esteem it a great acquisition. It has been fired twenty times, as fast as possible, and is supposed to be thorough proof. For my part, I am rather dubious of this matter, and have recommended fifty successive discharges instead of twenty.. If she would stand that, her sufficiency would be ascertained beyond a doubt, and her value would be immense; and as it is a new experiment, we cannot take too much pains to be sure. If Mr. Livingston can construct pieces of the same kind and weight that will stand a similar proof, he will render the most essential service to his country. We cannot have too respectable an artillery; and he need not doubt they will be wanted.

As to ships opposite to Fort Washington, the General first supposed they might be intended to make a descent on the Jersey side, and come by surprise on our left flank; but he now considers it wholly as an amusement, while they were executing their attempt on the stores at Danbury. Of this affair you are probably as well advised as we are.

I thank you for your promise of sending me the model of your government as soon as published. I have sanguine expectations concerning it.

Nothing new at head-quarters but the attempt against Danbury. If the enemy do not * * * * * till they get reinforced or receive further orders.

Troops coming on from the southward. We are told two thousand Carolinians, far on their way to Philadelphia—a part arrived.

I am, with great respect, gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

* Not legible in the manuscript.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, May 7th, 1777.

I thank you for the favor of the pamphlet containing your form of government, which, without flattery, I consider as far more judicious and digested than any thing of the kind that has yet appeared among us; though I am not so unreserved in my approbation as to think it free from defects. While I view it in the main as a wise and excellent system, I freely confess it appears to me to have some faults which I could wish did not exist. Were it not too late to discuss particulars for any useful end, or could my judgment have any weight in a matter, which is the work of so many far more able and discerning than I can pretend to be, I should willingly descend to an exhibition of those parts I dislike, and my reasons for disapproving. But, in the present situation of things, it would be both useless and presumptuous.

I congratulate you on the late important arrivals to the eastward. We consider them as immense acquisitions. Did I not suppose you must be possessed of the same particulars we have at head-quarters, I would transmit those we have to you. I congratulate you also on the Danbury expedition. The stores destroyed there have been purchased at a pretty high price to the enemy. The spirit of the people on the occasion does them great honor—is a pleasing proof that they have lost nothing of that primitive zeal with which they began the contest, and will be a galling discouragement to the enemy from repeating attempts of the kind. Such an opposition, under such circumstances, was not to be expected. By every account, both from our friends and from themselves, they cannot have sustained a loss of less than five hundred killed, wounded, and taken. An honest, intelligent lad, a prisoner with them, who made his escape two or three days ago, informs that he saw three vessels loaded with wounded. He was permitted to look into the hold of two of them, and affirms there could not be fewer than forty in each. He attempted to inspect the contents of the third, but

was hindered by the sentries. He also informs that there were loud wailings and lamentations among the soldiers' women on the occasion, and that the people of New-York considered the affair in the light of a defeat to the British troops.

From some late appearances, my opinion is greatly shaken as to the enemy's intention to move against Philadelphia. I begin to fear they will disappoint us with a contrary movement. The General is aware of this possibility, and will do every thing he can to provide for the event; and I trust the convention of your State will co-operate with him by every exertion in their power. By intelligence received yesterday and to-day, from Generals Putnam and Lincoln, at the outposts, we have reason to suspect the enemy will soon evacuate Brunswick, and push for Amboy, whence they will no doubt embark for some expedition by water. This may be either to Philadelphia, or up the North River. Or, perhaps, the appearances that indicate this, may be only feints to perplex and deceive us. The testimony of every person that comes from them confirms this fact, that their horses are in such miserable condition as to render them incapable of any material operations by land. If, therefore, proper care be taken, wherever they shall point their efforts, to prevent their collecting supplies of good horses among ourselves, I know not how it will be possible for them to penetrate any distance into the country. As far as it may depend upon them, I hope the convention will attend to this circumstance, and will take effectual measures to put it out of their power to gain such supplies in any part of your State towards which they may direct their movements. Nothing particular from Europe. Doctor Lee, indeed, writes, that from the face of affairs there, a war cannot be postponed longer than three months. He thinks, however, the English will be able to get a reinforcement this year of 8 or 10,000 Germans. If I mistake not, he says they have already engaged them, and sent transports to take them in.

I am, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, May 12th, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I have received the pleasure of your favor of yesterday's date. The reasons you assign for the interval of silence on your part are admitted as sufficient, though I regret that the principal one exists—the combination of the tories for a general insurrection. But, perhaps, on the scale of policy, I ought rather to congratulate you on the event. That there are too many tories in your State, as well as in several others, is a fact too well known. That they should confederate themselves for active purposes of revolt and disaffection, when once discovered, is desirable, because it arms the vindictive justice of the State, and will justify, in the eyes of all the world, a radical blow at the faction. Were it not that we have seen so many similar instances, that only prove the temerity and folly of the tories, I should consider this as a presumptive argument, that the enemy intend your way.

It seems now fully the opinion of our generals, that the last year's project for uniting the two armies, by the conquest of your State, will be prosecuted this champaign. To confirm this supposition, all the later intelligence we have received from the enemy strongly indicates an intention to evacuate the Jerseys; and 'tis thought there will be very great obstacles to an attempt upon Philadelphia, by way of the Delaware; 'tis concluded that the North River must be the object. And, upon this principle, Generals Greene and Knox, in whom his excellency has great confidence, are sent to examine the situation of things with you, and, in concert with General McDougal, who is in equal estimation, to adopt every proper expedient for putting you in the best state of defence. They set out this day.

If the enemy do not, in fact, aim at Philadelphia, they have been very artful in throwing out appearances well calculated to deceive; and which, though they have not had so full an effect as at any time to cause our cautious General to lose sight of the

other object which 'tis now imagined they propose to themselves, yet they have so far deceived as to beget pretty universally the opinion they wished to impose. But, for my own part, though I am staggered in my conjectures, yet I by no means give up my first supposition. I think it very probable they are only evacuating the Jerseys to be out of danger of an attack from us, which they have reason to fear from the increasing strength of our army, and mean to encamp on Staten Island till reinforced. It would be madness in them, weak as they are in numbers, to risk all in any capital attempt, and I am confident they will not do it unless they have a desperate game to play, and have no expectation of reinforcements. Such a conduct would be contrary to every principle of war or policy. Howe cannot take the field with more than eight thousand men; let him go where he will, the probability of a defeat will be strong, and the consequences of it would be absolutely fatal. How can he hope to penetrate far with so small a force, and with such a miserable supply of horses to convey his artillery and baggage? It seems to me, too, with respect to the supposed design upon your State, if it really existed, they would have taken care to have seized your forts, and other important posts, when they might have been apprised you were in no condition to defend them.

We have lately had one or two little skirmishes here. A party from Bound-brook beat up some of the enemies' advanced pickets from Brunswick. An attack was made upon their pickets near Bonum-town. We have no regular account of this matter; but what we have had is to this purport: "That a party under Col. Cook attacked one of their pickets and drove it in; that it was reinforced and sallied out again, and was beaten in a second time; that it received a second reinforcement and made a second sally; and that Gen. Maxwell, who conducted the affair, perceiving the matter growing too serious by continual succors coming to them from Brunswick and Amboy, thought it best to retire, which he did in good order—the enemy keeping at a respectful distance during the whole time of their retrogradation." 'Tis said we have lost between 20 and 30 killed and wounded, and a few stragglers taken; and 'tis also asserted

that some of our officers counted nineteen dead bodies of the enemy on the field. The royal Highlanders had taken possession of a wood, by way of ambuscade, out of which they were expelled by our troops. Here, I believe, the principal loss was sustained on both sides.

I am with great regard, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

P. S.—I thank you for the inclosures of every kind. I believe you have not received a letter I wrote a few days ago, giving my idea of your Constitution, with which, on a second inspection, I am better pleased than at first. You will oblige me by forwarding the inclosed.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, May 19th, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I this moment received the favor of your letter of the 16th instant.

I partly agree and partly disagree with you respecting the deficiencies of your Constitution. That there is a want of vigor in the executive, I believe, will be found true. To determine the qualifications proper for the chief executive magistrate requires the deliberate wisdom of a select assembly, and cannot be safely lodged with the people at large. That instability is inherent in the nature of popular governments I think very disputable; unstable democracy, is an epithet frequently in the mouths of politicians; but I believe that from a strict examination of the matter—from the records of history, it will be found that the fluctuations of governments in which the popular principle has borne a considerable sway, have proceeded from its being compounded with other principles;—and from its being made to

operate in an improper channel. Compound governments, though they may be harmonious in the beginning, will introduce distinct interests, and these interests will clash, throw the State into convulsions, and produce a change or dissolution. When the deliberative or judicial powers are vested wholly or partly in the collective body of the people, you must expect error, confusion, and instability. But a representative democracy, where the right of election is well secured and regulated, and the exercise of the legislative, executive, and judiciary authorities, is vested in select persons, chosen really and not nominally by the people, will, in my opinion, be most likely to be happy, regular, and durable. That the complexity of your legislature will occasion delay and dilatoriness, is evident, and I fear may be attended with a much greater evil;—as expedition is not very material in making laws, especially when the government is well digested and matured by time. The evil I mean is, that in time your Senate, from the very name, and from the mere circumstance of its being a separate member of the legislature, will be liable to degenerate into a body purely aristocratical.

And I think the danger of an abuse of power from a simple legislature, would not be very great in a government where the equality and fulness of popular representation is so wisely provided for as in yours. On the whole, though I think there are the defects intimated, I think your government far the best that we have yet seen, and capable of giving long and substantial happiness to the people. Objections to it should be suggested with great caution and reserve.

Nothing particular in the military line. The enemy still in the Jerseys, though they have been some time sending away their stores, baggage, &c., and are raising new works of defence. All this may be preparatory to an evacuation at all events, and they may be only intended to pave the way for a retreat, in case of an attack or any accident.

Advices from the West Indies, that have an appearance of authenticity, mention a French vessel bound for the Continent, being taken by the British frigate Perseus, and carried into Dominique; and a remonstrance being made by the Governor of

Martinique, threatening reprisals in case of a detention. Nay, some accounts say he has actually seized all the English vessels in the harbor of Martinique, and imprisoned their seamen till restitution shall be made. If these accounts be true, they are important, and may be considered as an earnest of more general hostility.

Perhaps your next favor will find me at Bound-brook. Head-quarters will soon be moved there. Our family seem desirous of cultivating a closer acquaintance with the enemy than we have had the pleasure of for some time past.

With real regard, I am, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
A. HAMILTON.

Relying on your punctuality in favoring me with any important intelligence your way, I am likely to lose a beaver hat, which was staked against the truth of the report of the stores at St. John's being destroyed. If you forget me in future, I will certainly excommunicate you.

HAMILTON TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

MIDDLE BROOK CAMP, June 2, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I received your favor per express, and as the absence of my former respectable correspondents has made a change necessary, I am happy that you have been substituted in their room.

Except a body of militia at and about Pumpton, and a few detachments of observation, our whole army is now collected at two points; the main body here, and a division under General Sullivan at Princeton. Though this alteration of circumstances takes off in a great measure the restraints imposed upon the enemy during the winter, gives them a more ample field to range in, and exposes the country more to their ravages, yet the measure

is abundantly justified by every wise military maxim. The rigor of the season has been heretofore our chief security against those advantages which might have been taken of our dispersed state; and this dispersion was necessary both for the conveniency of winter quarters, and with a view to confine and distress the enemy, which was the most capital object we could then propose to ourselves. It was also necessary by this method to second the check to that torrent of influence which their successes in the Jerseys had given them. Many other justifying reasons might be assigned, which I doubt not you will easily conceive, and which it would be indiscreet to commit to paper.

But now that a more active season is arrived, and something of importance must be done on one side or the other, it becomes our business to put ourselves in the best posture both for defence and offence. Common sense dictates that the best way to effect this is to collect our strength. In a collected state we can best repel a general attack; we can best make one, if circumstances warrant it; and we can move with greater expedition to disconcert any sudden push not immediately upon us, which the enemy are likely to make. It is needless to enlarge on a subject which your own judgment will enable you of itself to view in a just light.

As to the designs of the enemy, appearances are so intricate, fluctuating, and seemingly inconsistent, that it is difficult to form any certain conclusion from them. Either they do not understand themselves, and are very irresolute and fickle, or they very artfully manage matters to deceive us. I am rather inclined to suppose the former. This, however, I may say with tolerable certainty, that my ideas of their intending to operate to the Southward, derive just support from such parts of their conduct lately as are most intelligible. We have a variety of concurring intelligence that they have lately drawn more troops into the Jerseys —that they have brought over a large number of wagons, and all the boats prepared for bridges, with several other particulars of less importance, all which denote a preparation to operate this way. Persons who have been among them assert confidently that they mean to attack us. But we are divided in sentiment

as to the probability of that, or of their making a forced march to Philadelphia. If they act wisely, they will neither attack us in our present situation, strongly posted as we are, nor will they attempt to cross a river, where they may certainly expect opposition in front, and leaving at the same time a formidable army in the rear. He should endeavor to draw us off from here and fight us upon more equal ground. But after all, if he expects any timely reinforcements, upon what rational principle can he risk his own reputation and all the hopes of his cause, in an attempt with his present force, so extremely important and hazardous? Perhaps he only means to get every thing in readiness against the arrival of the reinforcements looked for, that he may immediately commence his operations. Things, however, will hardly bear this construction. We are told that in seventeen sail lately arrived from Europe, there were about 2000 raw recruits.

This from deserters.

The enemy yesterday perpetrated a most barbarous butchery upon a Lieutenant Martin of ours. He was out with a scouting party, and met some of the British light-horse; his men, it is said, quitted him. But however other matters may be, 'tis certain his dead body was found most horribly mangled. He had not a single bullet wound, but was hacked to pieces with the sword; he had several cuts in his head, each of which was sufficient to dispatch him, besides a number of more inconsiderable scars about his body and hands. It is evident that the most wanton and unnecessary cruelty must have been used towards him; for the greater part of his wounds must have been given him when utterly out of a condition to resist.

This may be relied on as a fact, for I saw his corpse, as did also every officer and soldier in camp that chose it. The General sent him down to their lines with a letter to Lord Cornwallis, as an undeniable evidence of their brutality; but the letter was taken from the flag and sent in; the flag and the body not permitted to pass their outposts.

I am, sir,
With real respect and esteem,
Your most obedient servant,
A. Hamilton.

HAMILTON TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

HEAD-QUARTERS, CAMP AT MIDDLE BROOK, June 28, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

Yours of the 25th came to hand last night. Since my last addressed to Mr. Morris, the enemy have been trying a second experiment to tempt us to an engagement, on equal terms of ground. Under the supposition of their intending to evacuate the Jerseys immediately, in order to keep up the idea of a pursuit, and to be in a posture to take advantage of any critical movement that might present itself, to give them a blow; the chief part of our army, after their retreat from Brunswick, was marched down to Quibbletown, and parties detached thence further towards the enemy. Finding this disposition take place, and expecting that, elated by what has passed, we might be willing to venture upon a general engagement, which is Howe's only hope, he came out with his whole army from Amboy, only on Thursday morning, and made a forced march towards our left, with design, if possible, to cut off some of our detachments, particularly one under Lord Stirling; and probably, if we were not expeditious in regaining the heights, to get there before us, by rapidly entering the passes on our left. Lord Stirling's party was near being surrounded; but after a smart skirmish with the enemy's main body, made their retreat good to Westfield, and ascended the pass of the mountains back of the Scotch plains. The other parties, after skirmishing on their flanks, came off to join the main body, and take possession of the heights. The enemy continued their march towards our left as far as Westfield, and there halted. In the mean time, it was judged prudent to return with the army to the mountains, lest it should be their intention to get into them, and force us to fight them on their own terms. They remained at Westfield till the next day, and perceiving their views disappointed, have again returned to Amboy, plundering and burning as usual. We had parties hanging about them on their return; but they were so much on their guard, no favorable opportunity could be found

of giving them any material annoyance. Their loss we cannot ascertain; and our own, in men, is inconsiderable, though we have as yet received no returns of the missing. I have no doubt they have lost more men than we; but unfortunately, I won't say from what cause, they got three field-pieces from us, which will give them room for vaporing, and embellish their excursion, in the eyes of those who make every trifle a matter of importance. It is not unlikely they will soon be out of the Jerseys; but where they will go to next is mere matter of conjecture, for, as you observe, their conduct is so eccentric, as to leave no certain grounds on which to form a judgment of their intentions.

I know the comments that some people will make on our Fabian conduct. It will be imputed either to cowardice, or to weakness. But the more discerning, I trust, will not find it difficult to conceive, that it proceeds from the truest policy, and is an argument neither of the one nor the other.

The liberties of America are an infinite stake. We should not play a desperate game for it, or put it upon the issue of a single cast of the die. The loss of one general engagement may effectually ruin us, and it would certainly be folly to hazard it, unless our resources for keeping up an army were at an end, and some decisive blow was absolutely necessary; or unless our strength was so great as to give certainty of success. Neither is the case—America can in all probability maintain its army for years, and our numbers, though such as would give a reasonable hope of success, are not such as should make us entirely sanguine. A third consideration, did it exist, might make it expedient to risk such an event—the prospect of very great reinforcements to the enemy; but every appearance contradicts this, and affords all reason to believe they will get very inconsiderable accessions of strength this campaign. All the European maritime powers are interested for the defeat of the British arms in America, and will never assist them. A small part of Germany is disposed to make a market of its troops, and even this seems not over fond of being drained any further. Many springs may be put in motion even to put a stop to this. The king of Prussia may, perhaps, without much difficulty, be engaged to espouse

views unfriendly to the court of Britain, and a nod of his would be sufficient to prevent all future German succors. He, as well as most other powers of Europe, feels the necessity of commerce and a large maritime force to be generally respectable. His situation, till lately, has been unfavorable to this; but the reduction of Poland, and the acquisition of Dantzig in the Baltic, have put it very much in his power to pursue commercial schemes; and may tempt him to be propitious to American independence. Russian assistance is still infinitely more precarious; for besides that it cannot be the true interest of that ambitious empire to put its troops to sale, it is at present embroiled with the Turks, and will want all its men to employ in its own wars. England herself, from the nature of her policy, can furnish few soldiers, and even those few can ill be spared, to come to America in the present hostile appearance of affairs in Europe. On whatever side it is considered, no great reinforcements are to be expected to the British army in America. It is therefore Howe's business to make the most of his present strength; and as he is not numerous enough to conquer and garrison as he goes, his only hope lies in fighting us, and giving a general defeat at one blow.

On our part, we are continually strengthening our political springs in Europe, and may every day look for more effectual aids than we have yet received. Our own army is continually growing stronger in men, arms, and discipline; we shall soon have an important addition of artillery, now on its way to join us. We can maintain our present numbers good, at least, by enlistments, while the enemy must dwindle away; and at the end of the summer the disparity between us will be infinitely great, and facilitate any exertions that may be made to settle the business with them. Their affairs will be growing worse, ours better; so that delay will ruin them. It will serve to perplex and fret them, and precipitate them into measures that we can turn to good account. Our business then is to avoid a general engagement, and waste the enemy away by constantly goading their sides in a desultory, teasing way.

In the mean time it is painful to leave a part of the inhabi-

tants a prey to their depredations; and it is wounding to the feelings of a soldier, to see an enemy parading before him and daring him to fight which he is obliged to decline.

But a part must be sacrificed to the whole, and passion must give way to reason. You will be sensible that it will not be advisable to publish the sentiments contained in this letter as coming from me; because this will make the enemy more fully acquainted with our views; but it might not be amiss to have them circulated, as those which ought to govern the conduct of the army, in order to prepare the minds of the people for what may happen, and take off the disagreeable impressions our caution may make.

I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

HEAD-QUARTERS, CORYEL'S FERRY, July 29th, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I have the pleasure of your favor of the 25th. I cannot be induced to think the enemy are so numerous as you apprehend, and would place no dependence on what is said either by deserters or prisoners, further than as it respects their own company, nor even that with regard to prisoners in general, who commonly have their cue, as the phrase is, and know very well how to manufacture stories calculated to serve the purposes of the side they belong to. If we may judge at all from the state of the British and foreign regiments in Howe's army, or the proportion of recruits they have had this year, we cannot but believe the representations you mention greatly exaggerated. Though the northern army have not suffered much by action, they have probably suffered more by sickness than the southern; for many accounts agree that they have been very sickly, and particularly, that there was a great mortality among them while lying at the

Isle of Noix. From the estimate of the first prisoner, they must have been greatly reduced by some means or other; for it appears that before his company had been augmented by the twenty-four foreigners, it was only twenty-six strong; and it is very improbable it should have had so large an augmentation, for I am morally certain the regiments under Howe have not had fifty men each as recruits, and I see no reason to suppose Burgoyne's could have had so much better luck. Eight companies, at twenty-six men each, amount to two hundred and eight. Suppose each regiment to have received one hundred recruits, which, by every rule of comparison, must be more than the truth; this brings a regiment to about three hundred men. Ten regiments, at three hundred each, amount to three thousand, the number of British troops in Canada. Again, if I am not mistaken, four thousand was the allotment of foreign troops for the northern department. As the sickness spoken of fell chiefly upon them, they, in all probability, lost more in that way than they have gained in recruits. But, even if this were not the case, they cannot exceed the original number—four thousand added to three thousand make seven thousand. Besides these, there are the grenadiers and light-infantry. Of these there cannot be above eighteen companies each, which, allowing them to contain every one fifty men, amount to eighteen hundred—and this brings them to about eight thousand eight hundred men in their whole force of British and foreign troops. Of these, at least one-sixth must be unfit for duty, by every calculation, which reduces the number of men fit for the field to about seven thousand five hundred. Part of these must be left in Canada, if it were for no other purpose than to guard their magazines, and for other duty of that kind. Nor could they with safety commit the charge of those things to the Canadians, many of whom are notoriously disaffected, and would be very likely to destroy instead of preserve them. From this view, which I verily believe is too favorable to them, they cannot bring more than between six and seven thousand British and foreign troops to act out of Canada. Out of these six or seven thousand, a considerable part must be left to garrison Ticonderoga, and secure their rear in case of accidents; for they could

not without madness attempt to advance, and leave the posts behind them in a defenceless state; and they may be obliged to increase their attention to this matter by keeping a body of men somewhere about the Grants, which has been recommended. When this last deduction is made, Burgoyne cannot advance with more than between five and six thousand men, to suppose him to act with his whole collective force; except Canadians and Indians, who are not, by any accounts, numerous.

Let us now take a view of our own force. When Glover's brigade gets up, and the recruits for the regiments there, now on their march, arrive, General Schuyler will have about five thousand continental troops. Surely the eastern States cannot sleep so soundly, when the danger is so imminent, but that they will reinforce him with eight or ten thousand militia. If this happens, and he cannot stop General Burgoyne's progress, it must proceed from other causes than the want of men. With about the same army last year, General Washington kept Howe with sixteen or seventeen thousand men at bay.

Perhaps it may be said, there will not be time to collect this force, as the enemy are advancing with very great rapidity. I am much mistaken if there will not be abundant time. The nature of the ground; the difficulty of transporting the immense quantity of baggage, provisions, &c., necessary to accompany an army of five thousand men penetrating an enemy's country; the want of wagons for the purpose; the impediments thrown in their way by cutting up the roads—all these obstacles will retard their march much more than is at first sight imagined, and will give full time to prepare them a good reception.

On the whole I am clearly of opinion, that unless Howe cooperates with Burgoyne against your State, it has very little to fear; and I even doubt, if he goes to the southward, whether Burgoyne will attempt to penetrate far. At present there is every appearance of a southern expedition. Seventy sail of the enemy's fleet have been seen passing by Little Egg Harbor, making short tacks towards the capes of Philadelphia. Three divisions of the army are arrived here and at Howel's Ferry, four miles up. One is coming on by way of Princeton, &c. Another

coming after us by way of Morristown. I wish this last to halt there. Two brigades more have been ordered to cross the North River and wait further orders. We shall not, however, pass the Delaware till we hear of the arrival of the enemy in the Capes of Philadelphia. Nor will those two brigades be ordered on till the same event takes place. We shall act the most cautious part possible in our circumstances. I communicated your letter to the General. He agrees with me in point of the enemy's numbers. With respect to animating the eastern States, he has written the most urgent letter to their several assemblies, which I am in hopes will answer the end you propose from sending persons to each of them.

It were to be wished your forts and ships were well supplied with cannon; but it is wholly out of the General's line to strip the ships to the eastward of their cannon for that purpose. If your Convention were to make application to the Congress or Board of War, it *might* succeed; but I should have very little hope of it.

I am, with great esteem, dear Sir,
Your most obedient,
ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, July 6, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

I received your favor of the 4th, by express. If I recollect how far my last went, it did not announce the return of the enemy from Westfield to Amboy, nor their evacuation of that place since. After resting and refreshing themselves a night, they decamped the following day, and proceeded to Amboy, from which place they went to Staten Island as expeditiously as they could; where they still remain.

The news from the northward wore so serious a face, that our generals thought the enemy were about to operate in earnest

against our posts in that quarter; and, as supposing this the case, General Howe might certainly be expected to co-operate by way of the North River, it was judged necessary to move the main body of the army from Middle Brook to Morristown; to advance a division under General Sullivan to Pumpton, and another under General Parsons as far as Peekskill. A brigade at that port, under General Nixon, was ordered, so soon as Parsons's division arrived near its destination, to proceed immediately as a reinforcement to the northern army. This disposition is deemed advantageous to prevent the success of a *coup de main* on the Highland passes, and not inconsistent with a proper attention to Philadelphia, should the northern alarm prove nothing more than a diversion, and Howe return to the charge that way.

I am loath to risk a conjecture about Mr. Howe. He is such an unintelligible gentleman, that no rule of interpretation can possibly be found out by which to unravel his designs. If he acted like a man of sense, he would wait quietly on Staten Island, and there concentrate all his forces. He would draw round him all the men that could be spared from Canada, and all that are now at Rhode Island. With these, and the reinforcements he may receive from Europe, he would make a point of forcing us, by some means or other, to an action. In this his only hope lies. If he could defeat our army, and improve the moment of success, he would go very near effecting his purpose; but, let him go to the northward or to the southward, every new post he takes weakens his main body, and makes it the more liable to be ruined by our collective strength. Any object short of our army is a bad one; and that plan is the worst, where, by a division of his forces, he runs the hazard, in case of an accident either way, of having his whole scheme overturned.

We have different accounts of the present situation of his army. Some tell us that the whole is now encamped on Staten Island; others, that the greater part of the Hessians are on board the ships. By some sailors who came from them yesterday, we are told that the ships are taking in water and provisions for two months, and that conveniences for transporting horses are fitting up in them. All this is rather vague, and may or may not be true.

Their flourishes in the Jerseys, I believe, cannot have cost them less than six or seven hundred men. We have not lost above a hundred. This is the best way to ruin them without risking any thing.

Our present situation is embarrassing. Their ships give them a vast advantage, and we shall probably be much puzzled when they begin their operations again. We shall, however, act cautiously, and do the best we can. We are anxiously waiting for northern intelligence.

I am, dear sir, with great regard,

Yours, &c.,

A. HAMILTON.

Please forward the inclosed to General Schuyler per first opportunity.

HAMILTON TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

HEAD-QUARTERS, CAMP AT CROSS ROADS, Aug. 18, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR:

I most sincerely and heartily sympathize with you in the distress and dangers under which your State is laboring at this critical period. I lament its misfortunes, as they are wounds to the common cause, as they more nearly interest those for whom I feel the warmest regard, and as they are suffered by a State which I consider in a great measure as my political parent. I wish any thing in my power could contribute to its relief.

I am fully sensible, with you, that Mr. Burgoyne's successes involve the most important consequences to America, and that a further progress in your State may bring on all the evils you delineate, and most deeply affect the common cause. I agree with you, that the loss of your State will be a more afflicting blow to America than any that could be struck by Mr. Howe to the southward; and I can assure you it is regarded in the same light

by others, whose thoughts of the matter are of much more consequence than my own. I may also add, that His Excellency has afforded the northern army all the assistance he could, in his circumstances, give, with the least degree of propriety; and were you as well acquainted with those circumstances as I am, you would be perfectly convinced of the truth of what I assert.

Though I have differed, and still differ, and, I believe, on the most substantial grounds, with you, as to the numbers of the enemy, yet I clearly perceive, from the spirit reigning in our army, and from the unpardonable backwardness of your eastern neighbors, that you have every thing to fear, notwithstanding your most strenuous exertions, which, to the honor of your State, are justly admired, as far surpassing what might naturally be expected from you under so many discouragements. I am so thoroughly impressed with your true situation, that I am fully of opinion, if Burgoyne is not speedily checked in his career, he will become the first object to this army, especially if Howe operates so far to the southward as every appearance seems to indicate. Charlestown is now thought to be the place of his destination. He has been seen passing by Sinnipuxint, steering southward, twelve days ago; and, as he has not been since heard of, 'tis concluded he must be bound pretty far in that course, and no object short of Charlestown is supposed at all worthy his attention. However common sense is against Mr. Howe's going so far to the southward, facts are so strongly in favor of it, that we must give credit to them. It is an inadmissible supposition, that he can be keeping a large fleet so long at sea merely as a feint, or that he would steer so far out of his way, if he really intended to operate to the northward; the more, as the season is at hand when he would be liable to heavy gusts on the southern shores, and contrary winds on his return.

If he goes so far southward, we cannot think of following him with this army; and if Burgoyne continues to penetrate, we must find means to stop him. This will point out the propriety of uniting this with the northern army, and falling upon him with their joint force; and perhaps nothing is more to be wished than that affairs should run into this train.

Before this reaches you, you will be informed that two regiments have gone from Peekskill to reinforce the northern army, and that Morgan's corps of riflemen are on their march for the same purpose. They left Trenton yesterday morning, and as they march light, and vessels are ordered to be ready waiting for them at Peekskill, they will soon be at the place of their destination. It has been my wish and endeavor for some time past, that this corps might be sent to your assistance. I expect much from them; they are a picked corps, well used to rifles and to wood-fights, commanded by officers of distinguished bravery, and have been very serviceable in frequent skirmishes with the enemy. I dare say these people will soon chastise the forwardness of the Indians, and I should not be surprised if, after a little time, they make them desert their British friends. Their known inconstancy and want of perseverance, give great reason to hope a few drubbings will exceedingly discourage them, and send the greatest part of them home. From every account, I am led to believe our misfortunes are greatly owing to a panic dread of the Indians. If this be so, the presence of Morgan's corps will not fail to have the most happy effect. It would be well to propagate through the country and army, such ideas of this corps as will tend to revive the spirits of both inhabitants and soldiers. If their number, which is about five hundred, it would do no harm. But of all things, my dear sir, let every topic be carefully avoided, that may tend to breed jealousies between this corps and the northern troops; such jealousies have been, are, and will be more detrimental to our affairs than any thing besides.

I communicated your letter to his Excellency.

I am, with real regard and esteem, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

P. S. Your express not calling on his return, was the sole reason of your not receiving a letter from me; I had written one to go by him.

His Excellency desires his particular respects to you, and as-

sures you that nothing in his power will be left undone for your assistance.

HAMILTON TO MORRIS.

HEAD-QUARTERS, WILMINGTON, September 1st, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

Agreeable to the intention of the council, I have delivered their inclosed letter to his Excellency, who, after perusing it, has sealed and forwarded it to Mr. Hancock.

The relieving Fort Schuyler is a very happy and important event, and will concur with the two happy strokes given by Herkemer and Starke, to reverse the face of affairs, and turn the scale against Mr. Burgoyne. I hope Captain Montgomery's suggestions may be right as to his being obliged to advance; but I fancy, if he once thinks it unsafe, he will not be bound by such an empty punctilio as to risk the destruction of his army. As General Howe is now fairly sat down to the southward, the eastern States, no longer under any apprehensions from him, will be disposed, I am in hopes, to exert their whole force; and if they do, I shall wonder at it if Mr. Burgoyne advances with impunity.

Before this reaches you, you will have heard of General Howe's coming into Chesapeake bay, where he has landed his whole army, within about four miles from the head of Elk; a day or two after his landing, he marched from his first position and extended his van as far as Green Hills. He still lies there in a state of inactivity, in a great measure, I believe, from the want of horses to transport his baggage and stores. It seems he sailed with only about three weeks' provender, and was six at sea; this has occasioned the death of a great many of his horses, and has made skeletons of the rest. He will be obliged to collect a supply from the neighboring country before he can move, unless he should be disposed to make a more hazardous movement

than he would ever be able to justify, unless by a degree of success he has no right to expect.

The main body of our army is encamped on the heights of Wilmington, so as to cover the town. We have strong parties of light troops and militia advanced towards the enemy, who have frequent skirmishes with them of little consequence, and often pick up a few prisoners. We have taken at least seventy since they landed, and have had thirty deserters. This country does not abound in good posts. It is intersected by such an infinity of roads, and is so little mountainous, that it is impossible to find a spot not liable to capital defects. The one we now have is, all things considered, the best we could find; but there is no great dependence to be put upon it. The enemy will have Philadelphia if they dare make a bold push for it, unless we fight them a pretty general action. I opine we ought to do it, and that we shall beat them soundly if we do. The militia seem pretty generally stirring. Our army is in high health and spirits. We shall, I hope, have twice the enemy's numbers. I would not only fight them, but I would attack them; for I hold it an established maxim, that there is three to one in favor of the party attacking.

I am in haste, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. HAMILTON.

JEFFERSON TO HAMILTON.*

December 23d, 1791.

Thomas Jefferson presents his respectful compliments to the Secretary of the Treasury, and incloses him the copy of a letter and table which he has addressed to the President of the United States, and which, being on a subject whereon the Secretary of the Treasury and Thomas Jefferson differed in opinion, he thinks it his duty to communicate to him.

* This letter was omitted by mistake in its order among the Cabinet papers.

JEFFERSON TO WASHINGTON.

SIR:

As the conditions of our commerce with the French and British dominions are important, and a moment seems to be approaching when it may be useful that both should be accurately understood, I have thrown a representation of them into the form of a table, showing at one view how the principal articles interesting to our agriculture and navigation stand in the European and American dominions of these two powers. As to so much of it as respects France, I have cited under every article the law on which it depends, which laws, from 1784 downwards, are in my possession.

Port charges are so different according to the size of the vessel, and the dexterity of the captain, that an examination of a greater number of port-bills might perhaps produce a different result. I can only say that that expressed in the table is fairly drawn from such bills as I could readily get access to, and that I have no reason to suppose it varies much from the truth, nor on which side the variation would lie. Still I cannot make myself responsible for this article. The authorities cited will vouch the rest.

I have the honor to be, with the most perfect respect and attachment,

Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

The President of the United States.

[For table, see Jefferson's Works, v. 3. p. 143.]

LETTERS OF H. G.

LETTER I.

NEW-YORK, February 20th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 18th instant has duly come to hand, and entitles you to my particular thanks. In return I shall endeavor fully to comply with your request, and furnish you, in a series of letters, with all the material in my power to enable you to judge what conduct it will be proper for you to pursue in relation to the ensuing election for Governor. Your influence is considerable, and you do well to examine before you resolve on what side to bestow it.

The present Governor was bred to the law under William Smith, Esquire, formerly of this city. Some time before the late revolution he resided in Ulster county, and there followed his profession with reputation, though not with distinction. He was not supposed to possess considerable talents, but, upon the whole, stood fair on the score of probity. It must, however, be confessed, he very early got the character with many of being a very *artful* man, and it is not to be wondered at, if that impression, on the minds in which it prevailed, deducted something from the opinion of his integrity. But it would be refining too much to admit such a consequence to be a just one. There certainly are characters (though they may be rare) which unite a great degree of address, and even a large portion of what is best expressed by

the word *cunning*, with a pretty exact adherence in the main to the principles of integrity.

Mr. Clinton, from his youth upwards, has been remarkable for a quality which, when accompanied by a sound and enlarged understanding, a liberal mind, and a good heart, is denominated *firmness*, and answers the most valuable purposes; but which, when joined with narrow views, a prejudiced and contracted disposition, a passionate and interested temper, passes under the name of *obstinacy*, and is the source of the greatest mischiefs, especially in exalted public stations.

This gentleman, immediately preceding the contest with Great Britain, was several times returned a member of Assembly for the county in which he lived, and being of a warm, zealous, and resolute temper, became in a great measure the head of one of the parties which then prevailed in the legislature. The merit or demerit of these parties is not now worthy of discussion—nor can they, or the principles upon which they reciprocally moved, be too soon or too entirely buried in oblivion.

In the beginning of 1775 the contest with Great Britain had become serious; and we all remember the interesting question then agitated in our Assembly, respecting the co-operation of this State in the general measures of America. Here Mr. Clinton and Mr. Philip Schuyler* were the leaders of the minority, who advocated the propriety of that co-operation; and both these gentlemen, for their conduct upon the occasion, will always be entitled to credit from the friends of the revolution. To compare the degree of merit to which they may respectively lay claim would be an invidious task. But as the partisans of Governor Clinton have taken pains to propagate an opinion of superior merit in him, in regard to this transaction, it is but justice to the other gentleman to observe, that he was equally *open* and *decided* in the part he took in that question; that as none will pretend to ascribe to Mr. Clinton greater abilities than to Mr. Schuyler, the exertions of the latter must have been at least as useful as those of the former; and that Mr. Schuyler has in his favor the additional circumstance of having risked

* Then called Colonel Schuyler, and since General Schuyler.

a large property, which Mr. Clinton had not to risk, upon the event of this revolution.

With sincere esteem,
I remain, dear sir,
Your obedient servant,
H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER II.

New-York, February 21st, 1789.

Sir:

Shortly after the breaking out of the war with Great Britain, Mr. Clinton received an appointment as Brigadier-General, in which capacity he served until he was elected Governor of this State, some time in the early part of the year 1777.

In both these situations, from the condition of the State, which, during the greater part of the war, was its principal theatre, Mr. Clinton was frequently engaged in military duties. There is, however, no part of his character which has been more misrepresented than the military part of it. His panegyrists describe him to us as the "war-worn veteran"—the complete soldier—the consummate general. One would imagine from their stories of him that he had often, in the language of sergeant Kite, "breakfasted upon ravelins, and picked his teeth with palisadoes"—that he was the first of American generals—a Marius in courage—a Cæsar in skill—inferior in nothing to a Turenne or a Monticuculli, an Eugene or a Marlborough. But trust me, my dear sir, this is mere rant and romance. That Mr. Clinton is a man of courage, there is no reason to doubt. That he was upon most occasions active and vigorous, cannot be justly disputed. In his capacity of Governor he was ever ready to promote the common cause, prompt in affording the aid of the militia when requisite; and scrupling not, when he thought his presence might be of use, to

put himself at the head of them. But here his praise as a soldier ends. Beyond this he has no pretension to the wreath of military renown. No man can tell when or where he gave proofs of generalship, either in council or in the field. After diligent inquiry, I have not been able to learn that he was ever more than once in actual combat. This was at Fort Montgomery, where he commanded in person; and which, after a feeble and unskilful defence, was carried by storm. That post, strongly fortified by nature, almost inaccessible in itself, and sufficiently manned, was capable of being rendered a much more difficult morsel to the assailants than they found it to be. This, I own, was not the common idea at the time; but it is not the less true. To embellish military exploits, and varnish military disgraces, is no unusual policy. Besides, Governor Clinton was at the zenith of his popularity—a circumstance which disposed men's minds to take a great deal for granted. One particular in this affair deserves to be noticed. It is certain that the Governor made a well-timed retreat, (I mean personally, for the greatest part of the garrison were captured,) a thing which must have occasioned no small conflict in the breast of a commander nice in military punctilio. But squeamishness on this head had been ill-placed. It was undoubtedly the duty of the *Brigadier* to provide in season for the safety of the Governor.

Those who are best acquainted with the particulars of the burning of Esopus, in the fall of the year 1777, assert that his Excellency was culpably deficient in exertion on that occasion. The fact seems to have been, that a large body of men remained unemployed in the vicinity, under his direction, while the descent of the enemy was made with little or no opposition. And there is room to suppose, that if a better countenance had been kept up, the evil might have been prevented.

Very sincerely yours,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER III.

New-York, February 22, 1789.

Dear Sir:

You mention, towards the close of your letter, two reports circulating in your county, which you say operate to the advantage of Mr. Clinton; the one, that at the time he first took the chair of government, "the great men," as they are insidiously called, declined the station, through apprehension of the dangers that might attend it,—not less willing *then* to set him up as a mark for the resentment of the power with which we were contending, in case of an unfortunate issue to the war, than eager *now* to deprive him of the well-earned fruits of his courage, after it has been happily terminated: the other, that the exertions made by this State during the war, are chiefly to be attributed to his influence.

Truly, my dear sir, had the terms of your letter been less positive, I could not have supposed it possible that suggestions so unfounded as these, and so easily to be disproved by the testimony of all well-informed men, could ever have been propagated.

So far is the first report from being true, that it is a fact notorious to those who were acquainted with the transactions of the period, that in the very first election for governor in this State, General Schuyler was a competitor with Mr. Clinton for the office, and it is alleged would have been likely to prevail, had not the votes of a considerable body of militia, then under the immediate command and influence of the latter, turned the scales in his favor.

Neither is there much more of truth in the second report. Mr. Clinton's zeal and activity in forwarding the revolution were unquestionably conspicuous. But to ascribe to him the chief merit of the exertions of the State, is to decorate him with the spoils of others. There were, at every period of the war, choice spirits in both Houses of the legislature, his equals in zeal and fortitude, his superiors in abilities. These men needed not his

incitement to invigorate their efforts, nor his counsel to direct their plans.

One of the number *only* I shall name, Egbert Benson, Esq., the present attorney-general; this gentleman, in the capacity of a member of the Assembly, long had a principal agency in giving energy and animation to the measures of the State. In confining myself to the mention of Mr. Benson, it is not because there are not others who have an equal right to it, but because it is his peculiar good fortune *to have virtues and talents, and yet to be unenvied.* And as it is my intention you should be at liberty to make any use of these letters which you may think proper, I am unwilling to attempt an enumeration of all the characters alluded to, lest, if incomplete, it should be the occasion of offence. Though not immediately connected with the subject, there is one circumstance which I cannot forbear mentioning before I conclude. Mr. Benson, during the war, was considered as the confidential friend and adviser of the governor. Not long after the peace, it was perceived that this relation between the two persons began to be weakened, and it is some time since it has been understood to have entirely ceased. The first appearance of the change was, to discerning men, an ill omen of the future. But Benson was an unfit confidant for the new system of policy. He was honest and independent. Materials better adapted for *tools* were wanted, and they have been selected with admirable judgment.

Yours, with much regard,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER IV.

New-York, February 24, 1789.

You will perceive, my dear sir, from the sketch I have given you, that though the present governor has a just title to credit for his exertions in the last revolution, yet the degree of credit to

which he is entitled has been immodestly exaggerated. It is to be wished, nevertheless, for the honor and interest of the State, that his administration since the peace was proportionably commendable. But with the close of the war, the scene of merit closes. All that succeeds is either negative or mischievous.

It may seem strange to some, that a man who had behaved well in one situation, should be so entirely defective or faulty in another. But men acquainted with human nature, and its history, on a large scale, will be sensible that there is nothing extraordinary in the thing. Many of those who have proved the worst scourges of society, have, in the commencement of their career, been its brightest ornaments. These fair beginnings are sometimes the effect of premeditation, to pave the way to future mischief; at other times, they are the natural result of a mixed character, placed in favorable circumstances.

In all struggles for liberty, the leaders of the people have fallen under two principal discriminations; those who, to a conviction of the real usefulness of civil liberty, join a sincere attachment to the public good, and those who are of restless and turbulent spirits, impatient of control, and averse to all power or superiority which they do not themselves enjoy. With men of the latter description, this transition from demagogues to despots is neither difficult nor uncommon.

Mr. Clinton, as a zealous advocate for American independence in the course of a war, in which the cause to which he was attached was every moment exposed to the most critical hazards, under the influence of a sense of continual danger to that cause, and of course to himself, as one of its supporters, was naturally led to activity and exertion. But such a situation affords a very partial and imperfect view of his character. No certain conclusion can be drawn from it of the general disposition and principles of the man. These can only be estimated with certainty in situations in which the passions have their natural and ordinary course, free from any violent impulse of any kind.

It is therefore in the peace-administration of Mr. Clinton, that we may expect to find the best materials for judging of his fitness or unfitness to govern. These I shall endeavor to explore

in some succeeding letters, concluding the present with this general observation: *I do not recollect a single measure of public utility, since the peace, for which the State is indebted to its chief magistrate.*

Yours with sincere regard,

H. G.

To ———, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER V.

NEW-YORK, February 25th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

In yours of the 23d instant, which has just come to hand, you observe that there are persons in your county who entertain favorable impressions of the present Governor, for the good order preserved in this city upon the evacuation by the British troops, and which you say is ascribed to his moderation, care, and decision. This is an idea not confined to your county. Mr. Clinton and his friends have had the address to disseminate it in this and in other parts of the district. The apprehensions excited by some inflammatory publications, prior to our taking possession of the city, disposed men's minds to regard it as a great merit in the Executive, that they were not subjected to general plunder and massacre. But this compliment to him includes a supposition of licentiousness and fury in the citizens in general, who returned within the district at that period, which they do not deserve, and which, in truth, form no part of the American character.

It must be confessed that there were a few violent men, and that these, for the sake of present consequence, endeavored to work on the passions of others for intemperate purposes. But the number of those who were inclined to violate the laws, or disturb the public peace, was at no time considerable enough to make the danger serious. The greater part were either for liberal and moderate measures, or, at worst, for some legislative

discriminations. It is worthy of remark, that some of the most heated have been, at all times, warm adherents to the Governor, and objects of his peculiar patronage.

What was the precise line of conduct pursued by his Excellency at the juncture in question, I have never been able clearly to ascertain. But to many, and to me among the rest, it appeared indecisive and temporizing, favoring more of artifice and duplicity than of real prudence or energy. A popular chief magistrate, as Mr. Clinton then certainly was, standing on the firm ground of national faith and the constitution, by an independent use of his influence, might, in all probability, have prevented some measures of that day which have been both injurious and disreputable to the State.

The inclination of the Governor to hinder tumult or commotion is not to be questioned. In his situation, a man must have been both abandoned and mad not to have had that inclination. Regard to his own authority and consequence, independent of other motives, was sufficient to produce it. But there are circumstances which warrant a conclusion, that he had formed a plan of building up his own popularity in the city upon that of certain individuals who were then advocates for persecution; not, indeed, in the shape of mobs and riots, but of *law;* by banishment, disfranchisement, and the like; and that his conduct was guided by condescensions to them, which, in some measure, involved him in their policy. There is a fact to this effect, the particulars of which I do not now distinctly recollect, but which, as far as my memory serves me, was of the following complexion:—The Council appointed for the temporary government of the Southern district, on account of some irregularities which had happened, passed a resolution, or framed a proclamation, for repressing the spirit that had occasioned them, which was intrusted to the Governor for publication. Instead, however, of executing the intention of the Council, he communicated their act to two of the persons alluded to, and, upon their advices or remonstrances, withheld it from publication till the next meeting of the Council, a majority of whom were then prevailed upon to rescind it.

It is not undeserving of attention, that the chief agents in promoting the laws, passed after the evacuation of the city, of which the inhabitants of the Southern district had reason to complain, were men who had been constantly devoted to the Governor; and that the persons who have had the greatest share in mitigating, or abrogating, those exceptionable laws, have been in opposite views to him. And it ought not to escape observation, that there has never been any official act of the Governor calculated to effect the alteration or repeal of those laws.

It is with reluctance, my dear sir, that I look back to transactions which cannot be too soon forgotten. All parties now rejoice in the effects of a more liberal policy. And I should not have been induced to revive topics of so disagreeable a nature, had it not been necessary as well to the advancement of truth, as to the performance of my promise to you.

I remain your friend and servant,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER VI.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 26, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

I shall now proceed to give you a brief history of the Governor's administration since the peace, as it respects the United States; from the whole of which, preferring the evidence of *actions* to that of *professions*, I am persuaded that you will agree with me, that there is satisfactory proof of his being an enemy to the AMERICAN UNION.

The facts from which I shall draw this conclusion are of the following nature:—

I. That while he has acknowledged the insufficiency of the old government, he has strenuously opposed the principal measures devised by the joint councils of America, for supporting and strengthening it.

II. That he has treated Congress, as a body, in a contemptuous manner.

III. That his behavior towards the individuals composing that body, has been of a nature calculated to give them just cause of disgust.

IV. That he disapproved of the very first step taken towards the effectual amendment of the old confederation.

V. That he prejudged and condemned the new Constitution before it was framed.

VI. That he opposed it, after it appeared, with unreasonable obstinacy.

VII. That he has continued his opposition to it even since its adoption by this State. And,

VIII. That he is unfriendly to the residence of Congress in this city.

From the assemblage of these facts, I am mistaken, my dear sir, if you do not think the evidence of his enmity to the Union complete; and I shall not be the less mistaken if you do not consider this as a conclusive objection to his re-election.

Whatever may have been your doubts respecting parts of the new Constitution, I am satisfied that you regard the preservation of the UNION as essential to the peace and prosperity of the country, and will deem it unsafe to trust any man with power, who entertains views inimical to it.

Unfeignedly yours,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER VII.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 27th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

In my last I stated a number of facts tending to prove that Mr. Clinton is not a friend of the *Union*. I would not be under-

stood, that either of these facts singly would authorize such a conclusion, but that it is the result of them collectively. Many men, of whose good intentions I have no doubt, have entertained similar sentiments with him on several of the points stated; but I am mistaken if there is to be found one, out of the circle of his immediate instruments, who has had or discovered the same disposition in all the particulars. I shall now briefly mention the different articles of charge.

The first is, that, while he has acknowledged the insufficiency of the old government, he has strenuously opposed the principal measures devised by the joint councils of America for supporting and strengthening it.

This admission of the insufficiency of the old confederation has not only been made in private conversations, but fully and pointedly in the late Convention of this State. He has not, however, uniformly held the same language, as will be taken notice of hereafter.

To prove the latter part of the charge, I shall instance his opposition to the impost system proposed by Congress, and repeatedly urged by them as the only measures to obtain revenue, for objects of indispensable importance, on which reliance could be placed.

The first idea of a general impost for the benefit of the United States, is said to have originated in a convention held at Hartford, consisting of deputies from the four New England States and from New-York. The measure was agreed upon in Congress in February, 1781, at a period when the United States, after various trials of requisitions, and of other expedients, were reduced to the utmost extremity of distress, for want of money to carry on the war. The impost then proposed was, I believe, granted by all the States except Rhode Island. The act of this State, passed 19th of March, 1781, expressly provides, that the duties granted to Congress "*should be levied and collected in such manner and form, and under such pains, penalties, and regulations, and by such officers, as Congress should from time to time make, order, direct, and appoint.*"

But, on the appearance of peace, the system of our policy

changed. The foregoing act was repealed by one passed the 15th of March, 1783, by which it was too apparent that the leaders of our councils, at the first dawn of peace, were resolved to desert the principles which had governed them in the time of common danger.

It is true, that the same act grants the duties anew, but to be collected by the officers, and under the authority of the State; which was so essential an alteration of the plan as would have rendered it necessary (had not the opposition of Rhode Island already done so) to recommence the business in a new form, in order that all the States might stand on an equal footing.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your obedient and humble servant,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER VIII.

New-York, February 28th, 1789.

Dear Sir:

The embarrassments experienced in carrying through the first plan, the increase of the national debt, and other circumstances, induced Congress to devise a new system of impost, which was finally agreed upon on the 18th of April, 1783.

In this system, the appointment of the officers to collect the duties was referred to the several States, which it was supposed would remove the principal objection to the former plan. All the States, except New-York, substantially adopted it, annexing certain precautions for the more secure exercise of the powers granted to Congress. But New-York persisted to the last in withholding her assent. She passed, indeed, a law for granting an impost on different principles; but as Congress could not accept this without releasing the other States, and setting the whole business afloat, it was evident to all the world, that the act

of New-York was nothing better than a mere evasion of the thing asked.

The Governor, undoubtedly, took an active part in opposition to this measure. It is true, he declared in the convention that he had always been a friend to the impost, but *could not agree* to the manner in which Congress proposed to exercise the power. This is plainly a subterfuge. He was a friend to an abstract something, which might be any thing or nothing, as he pleased; but he was an enemy to *the thing proposed*. A general impost, being a measure not within the provision of the confederation, could only be brought about by some general plan devised by the common councils of the UNION, and submitted to the adoption of the several States. There could else be no concert, no common agreement. To oppose, therefore, the specific plan offered, and yet pretend to be a friend to the thing in the abstract, deserves no better name than that of hypocrisy.

I am possessed of unquestionable evidence, to prove that he used personal influence with members of the legislature to prejudice them against the granting of the impost. You may obtain a confirmation of this from one of the gentlemen who represented your own county in the year 1786. The argument employed with him was, that Congress being a single body, and consequently without checks, would be apt to misapply the money arising from it. This looks like more than an objection to the mode. If the money was to be granted in any shape, that consequence, if to be apprehended at all, might follow.

A question of a very delicate and serious nature arises on the conduct of the Governor. Is it justifiable in the chief magistrate of a State to employ his personal influence with individual members of the legislature in relation to any matter of public concern, which is to come under their deliberation? To me an interference of this sort appears highly exceptionable.

With sincere regard, I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER IX.

NEW-YORK, March 2d, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

The second particular which I have stated, as evidence of Mr. Clinton's enmity to the Union, is, that he has treated Congress, as a body, in a contemptuous manner.

A proof of this exists in his refusal to convene the legislature of this State in the year 1786, upon pressing and repeated supplications of Congress; sheltering himself under the frivolous pretence, that the constitution did not leave him at liberty to do it.

The constitution empowers the governor to convene the legislature "on extraordinary occasions." This provision is evidently calculated to enable him to call together the legislature whenever any thing of importance out of the ordinary routine of State business should occur. To put any other meaning upon it is absurd, and would embarrass the operations of government. It cannot be supposed that the constitution intended by "extraordinary occasions," nothing but wars, rebellions, plagues, or earthquakes. The word "extraordinary," as used in this case, can only be construed as equivalent to *special;* and a special occasion is any thing of moment out of the common and expected course. It merits attention, that the words of the constitution are, simply, that the governor "shall have *power* to convene the legislature upon extraordinary occasions." This mode of expression has plainly an *authorizing* and *empowering*, not a *restricting* operation. It is true that the governor is bound, in the exercise of this power, to observe a reasonable discretion, and not to act with caprice, levity, or wantonness; but the same may be said of every other power with which he is intrusted, and does not affect the constitutional sense of the provision.

Let us now, sir, take a view of the nature of the application and refusal. The legislature of the State, in May, 1786, passed the act I have already mentioned, in lieu of one conformable to the *plan proposed* by Congress, and *agreed* to by the other twelve States; for even Rhode Island had at length got the better of

her scruples. Congress were of opinion, for the most obvious and solid reasons, that they could derive no advantage from the act of New-York; that to attempt it would be to let go their hold on the twelve adopting States, who had made the passing of similar acts by all the States, the condition of their grants; that the act of New-York, independent of the objection just mentioned, was framed upon principles mischievous in their nature, and calculated not only in a great measure to defeat the revenue, but to prevent several of the States from entering into the plan. One of these principles was, that the paper money of the States should be receivable in payment of duties. If Congress had acceded to such a plan, the consequence would have been, that the other States which had emitted paper money would insist upon the same privilege; by which mean the duties would be paid in nominal money of different degrees of value, in some States at a depreciation of forty or fifty per cent.; a circumstance which would have diminished the product of the impost, rendered the burthen unequal upon the citizens of different States, and deterred the States averse to paper money from engaging in the scheme.

Congress, for these and other good reasons, considered the act of New-York as amounting to nothing. They felt at the same time that the honor and interest of the Union were suffering for want of the co-operation of this State. They experienced the most painful embarrassment, in particular from the just demands of those foreigners, who had lent us money to carry on the war. They saw themselves without resource, even for paying the interest of the foreign debt, except by new loans abroad for that purpose; a resource which had the pernicious effect of an accumulation of the debt (for which all our estates must be considered as mortgaged) by the tremendous process of compound interest.

In this disgraceful and ruinous situation, the representatives of the United States make a solemn application to the Governor to convene the legislature, for the purpose of reconsidering their act. He refuses to comply, assigning the curious reason, that the Constitution empowers him to convene the legislature only on extraordinary occasions, and that the present does not seem to

him such. To give color to this idea, he intimates the recent consideration of the business by the legislature.

He seems in this proceeding not only to have taken it for granted, that the legislature would be immovable by the most solid reasons for altering their policy, (which, if true, he had no right to presume,) but also to have forgotten, or not to have chosen to recollect, that the legislature to be convened was not to be regarded as the same body which had before decided, having been formed by a subsequent election of the people. The measure would, therefore, have had to undergo a new examination by a new body.

He, notwithstanding, refuses. Congress, impelled by the exigency of the situation, pass new resolutions, declaring their opinion that the critical and embarrassed situation of the finances of the United States required that the system of impost should be carried into immediate effect; and that they deemed the occasion sufficiently important and extraordinary to request that the legislature of this State should be convened; and therefore again earnestly recommending it to the Executive to convene the legislature. The Governor persisted in his refusal, and the legislature is not convened.

Now, sir, I will boldly appeal to every candid mind, whether this transaction is not evidence, as well of a splenetic and disrespectful disposition towards the government of the United States, as of a temper inflexibly haughty and obstinate. In what a humiliating light must he have considered Congress, not to have looked upon their earnest and repeated application, on a matter which they and all the other States thought of the most serious moment to the Union, in a situation notoriously distressing and critical, as an occasion sufficiently special to leave him *at liberty* to call the legislature together! How much of contempt and disregard towards the representative authority of confederated America was implied in such a construction! The merits of the impost system are of no consequence in the consideration of the subject. The whole is a question of decorum and due deference in the head of a particular member of the confederacy towards the head of the whole confederacy. In this light, it is evident

that the conduct of the Governor on the occasion was an insult to the people of the United States, and of course to the people of this State, through their representatives in Congress.

I remain with the truest attachment, dear Sir,

Your obedient and humble servant,

H—— G——.

To —— —— Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER X.

NEW-YORK, March 3, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

I have mentioned as a third circumstance tending to prove the enmity of the Governor to the *Union*, "That his behavior towards the individuals composing Congress has been of a nature calculated to give them just cause of disgust."

I am well informed that his Excellency never made a visit to, or had any intercourse of civilities with either of the two last Presidents of Congress. This neglect on his part appears the more pointed, as it is well known that he had been upon a footing of intimacy with one of the gentlemen previous to his appointment, I mean General St. Clair. This gentleman had been heard to lament that the Governor's conduct towards him, in an official respect, had put it out of his power to keep up the amicable intercourse which had formerly subsisted between them. It seems as if the character of a President of Congress amounted, in the Governor's estimation, to a forfeiture even of the rights of private friendship.

This behavior to the official head of Congress, is to be regarded in a stronger light than mere disrespect to the individual. It may justly be esteemed disrespect to the body themselves, and to have been dictated by a disposition to humiliate the government which they administered.

The same spirit ran through the Governor's conduct towards the members of Congress in general. Very few, if any of them, experienced any attentions whatever from him.

Whatever apology may be made for the Governor's want of decent hospitality towards the representatives of the United States, I believe it will be difficult to find an excuse for his personal neglect of them. There are civilities which cost nothing, and these might have been bestowed without any violation of the frugality of his Excellency's maxims.

It may be asked, how it can be determined where the fault lay, whether with the Governor, or with the individuals of Congress? I answer, that with regard to the Presidents of Congress, there can be no doubt. As that body sat in the State, it was unquestionably the duty of the Governor to pay the first attentions to the President after his election. This rule has been understood throughout America, and its propriety is self-evident. The omitting to pay those attentions, was a mark of disregard to the government of the Union, for which there can be no excuse, and which admits of but one interpretation.

Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely, &c.,

H—— G——.

To —— Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER XI.

New-York, March 4th, 1789.

Dear Sir:

Some time in the latter part of the year 1785, or beginning of 1786, the State of Virginia proposed the holding a convention, for the purpose of devising some system of commercial regulations for the United States. This State, among others, acceded to the proposition, and the deputies from the different States appointed

pursuant, met at Annapolis in the fall of 1786. But the number actually assembled formed so incomplete a representation of the Union, that, if there had been no other reason, it would have been inexpedient for them to proceed in the execution of their mission. In addition to this, they were unanimously of opinion, that some more radical reform was necessary; and that even to accomplish the immediate end for which they had been deputed, certain collateral changes in the federal system would be requisite, to which their powers in general could not be deemed competent. Under these impressions, they, with one voice, earnestly recommended it to the several States to appoint deputies to meet in convention, in the ensuing month of May, with power to revise the confederation at large, and to propose such alterations and amendments as should appear to them necessary to render it adequate to the exigencies of the Union.

The report of this convention was in course handed to the Governor, on the return of the deputies of this State from Annapolis.

I have ascertained it beyond a doubt, that in a conversation on the subject of this report, he expressed a strong dislike of its object, declaring that, in his opinion, no such reform as the report contemplated was necessary; that the confederation as it stood was equal to the purposes of the Union, or, with little alteration, could be made so; and that he thought the deputies assembled upon that occasion, would have done better to have confined themselves to the purposes of their errand.

This was the first thing that gave me a decisive impression of the insincerity of his Excellency's former conduct. The opponents of the impost system had, in their writings and conversation, held up the organization of Congress as a principal objection, to the grant of power required by that system. The same sentiment had been conveyed by the Governor. The want of checks from the constitution of Congress, as a single body, seemed to be the bulwark of the opposition. But now that a proposal was made which evidently had in view a different construction of the federal government, the language was all at once changed. The old confederation as it stood, or with little alteration, was deemed to be competent to the ends of the Union.

This, then, seemed to be the true state of the business. On the one hand, Congress, *as constituted*, was not fit to be trusted with power; on the other, it was not expedient to *constitute them differently*. To me it appears impossible to reconcile all this to a sincere attachment to an *efficient federal government*. Thus, sir, have I explained to you my meaning in the assertion: that the Governor disapproved of the very first step taken towards the effectual amendment of the old confederation.

I remain with esteem, dear Sir,

Your very humble servant,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER XII.

NEW-YORK, March 6th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

One of the circumstances stated to you in mine of the 26th of February, to show that the Governor is unfriendly to the *Union*, is, that he prejudged and condemned the new Constitution before it was framed.

This fact has been long since given to the public, to which no other answer, that I have heard, has been made by his Excellency or his friends, than that he, as a citizen, had a right to entertain and declare such sentiments as appeared to him proper. This is a position not to be denied; but it is equally undeniable, that his constituents have as good a right to judge of the propriety of his opinions and conduct, and of the views by which they seem to be actuated.

While the convention was sitting at Philadelphia, the Governor, I am well informed, made unreserved declarations of his opinion, that no good was to be expected from the appointment or deliberations of that body. That the most likely result was, that the country would be thrown into confusion by the measure. That it was by no means a necessary one; as the confed-

eration had not had a sufficient trial, and probably, on more full experiment, would be found to answer all the purposes of the Union.

Here we will discover the clearest indication of a predetermined opposition in the mind of his Excellency. He is not a man governed in ordinary cases by sudden impulse. Though of an irritable temper, when not under the immediate influence of irritation, he is circumspect and guarded; and seldom acts or speaks without premeditation and design.

Language of the kind I have mentioned, from him, clearly betrayed an intention to excite prejudices beforehand against whatever plan should be proposed by the convention. For such conduct, or for such an intention, no apology can be made. The United States conceived a convention to be proper, necessary, and expedient. They appointed one, this State concurring. Their deputies were actually assembled, and in deliberation. The step once taken, it became the duty of every good man to give the attempt a fair chance. It was criminal to endeavor to raise prepossessions against it. That very conduct might have led to the mischief predicted. It was certainly not his Excellency's fault that his predictions were not fulfilled. In all probability, if his whole party had been as pertinacious as himself, the confusion he foretold would now exist. But, happily for the United States, some of them were more prudent, and we are in peace.

The declarations of the Governor on this occasion, fix upon him the charge of inconsistency. How can what he said in the instance in question be reconciled with his declaration in the convention, "*that he had always lamented the feebleness of the confederation?*"

Yours, with great regard,

H. G.

To —— Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER XIII.

March 7th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

The next in order of the circumstances, alleged in proof of the unfriendly disposition of the Governor to the Union, is that he opposed the new Constitution, after it appeared, with unreasonable *obstinacy*.

To judge of the propriety of this observation, it ought to be recollected, that the merits or demerits of that constitution must, after all, be in a great measure a speculative question, which experience only can solve with *certainty*.

It ought also to be recollected that the convention who framed it consisted, if not wholly, at least generally, of men from whom America had received the strongest proofs of patriotism and ability; that this body, so composed (with the exception of only three individuals), united in the plan, which was the result of their joint deliberations; and that a Franklin and a Washington are among the number of those who gave their approbation to it.

It ought further to be attended to, that when the convention of this State came to a decision, ten out of the thirteen States *had adopted* the Constitution, and that a *majority* of the characters in each State, most distinguished for virtue and *wisdom*, were among its advocates.

These, sir, are *truths* which (notwithstanding the clandestine arts made use of to traduce some of the best and brightest characters of America for being friends to the Constitution) no man of candor or information among its opponents will deny.

I do not infer from them, that the Constitution ought on those accounts to have been considered as a good one; but I contend that they dictated greater moderation in the opposition than appeared in the Governor's conduct. They ought to have taught him, that unless he had better assurance of his own infallibility than an impartial estimate of himself would justify, there was a possibility of his being mistaken in his *speculations*; and that

as a further resistance to the general sense of America was pregnant with manifest inconveniences and hazards, it became him to sacrifice the pride of opinion to a spirit of accommodation.

I should be the last to blame any man for opposing the adoption of the Constitution, while its establishment was yet a question in the United States; but when that was no longer the case; when nine States, the number required by the Constitution to its establishment, had adopted it; when it had thereby become the government of the Union, I think further opposition was not justifiable by any motives of prudence or patriotism. These considerations had their proper weight with a great proportion of the Governor's party.

Out of sixty-four members, of which the Convention of this State consisted, there were at first only nineteen in favor of the Constitution. In the conclusion, there was a majority which did actually adopt it. But the Governor *persisted to the last in his negative.*

All those of his party who concurred in the adoption (and among whom were some of its ablest leaders), are to be regarded as so many witnesses to the unreasonable obstinacy of the Governor's conduct on the occasion. Why did they agree to adopt? Because they saw that a contrary course was replete with danger to the peace and welfare of this State and of the Union. They acted in that like moderate and prudent men. Why did not his Excellency act a similar part? Let facts decide! Let the collective complexion of his language and behavior inform us! The inference from the whole will certainly not exempt him from the imputation of obstinacy, nor give us a very favorable impression of his inclination to preserve the tranquillity and UNION of the States.

I entertain no doubt that your judgment of this instance of the Governor's conduct will correspond with mine, as I have understood that the conduct of the members of your county had met your entire approbation. These gentlemen are among the number of those who, though like yourself, are not attached in the abstract to the Constitution as it stands, prudently yielded

to the considerations of expediency which recommended its adoption.

Accept my best wishes for your health, and

Believe me always yours,

H. G.

To ————, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER XIV.

March 8th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

The seventh of the circumstances enumerated in proof of his Excellency's enmity to the Union is, that he has continued his opposition to the new Constitution even since its adoption by this State.

There are two kinds of opposition, direct and indirect. The Governor must have been an idiot to have rendered himself chargeable with the first kind. It would have brought the resentment of the whole community upon him, and frustrated the very object he had in view. Indirect methods were the only ones that could be practised with safety, or with any prospect of success. To embarrass, not to defeat, the operations of the government, was, of necessity, the plan of a man who wished ill to it.

The adversaries of the Constitution in Virginia have furnished a striking specimen of this species of policy. The last legislature in which they were predominant, made no difficulty about organizing the government. The act of the people was, of course, to be obeyed in appearance. But its efficacy was to be destroyed by throwing obstacles in the way of the administration of the system. For this purpose an act has been passed, declaring it incompatible for any officer of the State to perform official functions under the authority of the United States.

This act, *if valid*, would *oblige* the United States to have a

complete set of officers for every branch of the national business —judges, justices of the peace, sheriffs, jail-keepers, constables, &c., which could not fail to render the government odious. This may serve as a sample of the means by which it may be distressed and counteracted.

The friends of the Governor tell us that after the adoption of the Constitution, he declared in convention that he would conceive himself bound to maintain the public peace, and to concur in putting the system *into operation*. This was saying as little as possible. Luckily, the public peace was in no danger; and his Excellency, with all his hardihood, would not dare to refuse an official co-operation in putting the government established by the people in *motion*. I attended the debates of the convention, and I could not forbear remarking, that the *Governor*, in the speech alluded to, seemed carefully to confine his assurances to a mere *official compliance*. The impression made upon my mind by the *two* last speeches he delivered, was this: that he would, as Governor of the State, in mere official transactions, *conform* to the Constitution; but that he should think it expedient to keep alive the spirit of opposition in the people, until the *amendments proposed*, or another convention (I am not certain which), could be obtained. In this impression I am not singular; there were others who understood him in the same sense.

No reasonable man can doubt that such a sentiment was an unjustifiable one. The United States are to determine on the propriety of amendments, and on the expediency of a convention. Both must be referred to their judgment. If they think both improper or unnecessary, it is the duty of a particular member to acquiesce. This is the fundamental principle of the social compact. To threaten the continuance of an opposition, therefore, till either of those purposes was accomplished, was in every way intemperate and unwarrantable. That there will be a reconsideration of parts of the system, and that certain amendments will be made, I devoutly wish and confidently expect. I have no doubt that the system is susceptible of improvement, and I anxiously desire that every prudent means may be used to conciliate the honest oponents of it. But I reprobate the idea of

keeping up an opposition upon principles, which derogate from those on which it is, and must necessarily be supported. I reprobate the idea of one State giving law to the rest.

But even the official compliance promised by the Governor, has hitherto been afforded in a very ungracious and exceptionable manner; in such a manner as indicates secret hostility and a disposition to have the government considered in an unimportant and inferior light. On the 13th of September, 1788, the act for organizing the government was passed by Congress, and it is presumed was communicated without delay. We know that it immediately appeared in the public papers. But it was not until the 13th of October following, that the Governor issued his proclamation for convening the legislature, and the time appointed for their meeting was less than a month from that which was fixed for the appointment of electors to choose the President and Vice-President. This procrastination appeared at a time extraordinary to every body, and wore the aspect of *slight* and *neglect* at least. The Governor asserts that it was impracticable to convene the legislature sooner; but he has not told us why it was so; and I scruple not to affirm, that if a reason is ever assigned, it will be found so flimsy a one, as to discover the insignificant light in which his Excellency was disposed to view and treat the national government. *Neglect* and *slights* calculated to lessen the opinion of the importance of a thing, and bring it into discredit, are often the most successful weapons by which it can be attacked.

But this is not the only view in which the delay in convening the legislature is to be considered as reprehensible. It had the effect of depriving the legislature itself of the exercise of a right vested in them by the national Constitution, and hazarded an undue postponement of our representation in Congress, which has actually happened. As to the first, the Constitution of the United States leaves the mode of appointing ELECTORS to the discretion of the State legislatures. They may, therefore, refer them to the choice of the people, if they think proper. This has been done in several of the States, and is, in my opinion, a privilege which it is of great importance should be in the hands of the people.

Making the usual allowances for want of punctuality in meeting, disagreement in opinion, difficulties in framing new and untried regulations, it may be safely pronounced that the legislature was assembled too late to refer the choice of electors to the people; whereby they were deprived of an opportunity of exercising a constitutional discretion, and *the people* of a chance of exercising a privilege of very considerable moment to their interests. May it not be justly said in this instance, that the Governor UNDERTOOK TO THINK for the legislature? But this is not all. The state of the parties in the legislature was understood long before they met, and it was to have been foreseen that there would have been a diversity of views in regard to the mode of appointing our national representatives, and consequently delays in agreeing upon any. By not calling the legislature early enough to allow time for overcoming these impediments, it happens, that in a matter in which the two houses did finally agree, to wit, the manner of choosing members of the national House of Representatives, the execution has been so greatly procrastinated, that it must be more than a month from the time appointed for the meeting of the body before it can be even ascertained who our representatives are.

There is a further circumstance in which the Governor's conduct subjects him to the suspicion of an intention to embarrass the measures relating to the Constitution.

The Senate having, in very gentle terms, intimated a wish that the legislature had been more early convened, the Governor, in a very petulant and indecent reply, considering that it was the Executive speaking to a branch of the legislature, made himself a party on the side of the Assembly in the controversy between the two houses, and thereby furnished a motive of obstinacy to the one and of irritation to the other. It is well known, that in that controversy, one of the reasons on which the Assembly had chiefly relied in insisting upon the joint ballot, was, that it *approached more nearly to an election by the people;* while the Senate held that they were entitled to an equal voice, and that, as being the *peculiar representative*, by our Constitution, of the *great body of the freeholders*, they were bound, by a regard to the interests of

that class, as well as to their own rights as a branch of the legislature, to insist upon the equality they claimed.

The Senate in their speech had observed, that, if there had been time, they would have been for referring the choice of electors to the people. The Governor answers, that it was impracticable to convene the legislature in time for that object, and intimates a persuasion that the Senate will see the propriety of pursuing their principle as far as circumstances would permit, by adopting such mode of appointment as should appear *most nearly to approach an election by the people*, adverting to the ground which had been taken by the majority in the Assembly. This intimation of the Governor could not be understood in any other light than as advocating their principle, and could not have failed to have had the effect of confirming them in it, and alienating the Senate, who were indelicately treated, still more from it. There are circumstances which render a hint as intelligible as the most precise and positive expressions.

This species of interference in a question between the two branches of the legislature was very unbecoming in the Chief Magistrate, and bespoke much more the intemperate partisan than the temperate arbiter of differences prejudicial to the State.

And the inference from the whole of what I have stated, is, that the Governor, since the adoption of the Constitution in this State, has manifested the *reverse* of a disposition to afford it a cordial support.

I remain, with great regard,

Yours, &c.,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER XV.

March 9th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

The last of the circumstances mentioned by me in my letter of the 20th of February, as evincive of the inimical disposition of

the Governor towards the Union, is, that he is unfriendly to the residence of Congress in this city.

This may be inferred from the disrespectful manner in which he has treated that honorable body, aggregately and individually, as detailed in some former letters; and from his fomenting that spirit of party in the legislature which has left us without a representation in Congress.

But the matter does not rest on this evidence only. I have direct proof that he has held language clearly indicating an opinion in him, real or affected, that it was a disadvantage to the State to have the seat of the federal government in it. His objections have been drawn from its pretended tendency to promote luxury and dissipation. He has, I am well informed, talked in this style, among others, to our friend, Judge ——, of —— county, with some circumstances of aggravation, which, from a regard to decency, I forbear to repeat.

Now, my dear sir, nothing but a rooted hostility to all federal government could have dictated this sentiment in the breast of the Governor. Every man of sense knows that the residence of Congress among us has been a considerable source of wealth to the State; and as to the idle tale of its promoting luxury and dissipation, I believe there has not been for a number of years past a period of greater frugality than that in which Congress have resided in this city. As far as my observation or information extends, it has made no sensible difference in the style of living, as to the article of expense. The truth must be, that the Governor has supposed that the presence of Congress in the State has had an influence in encouraging the zeal and exertions of the friends to federal government. Thus it appears that the whole system of thinking adopted by the Governor has been manifestly adverse to every thing connected with the federal government, has led him to view all its concerns through a jaundiced medium.

To what can all this be attributed? To what can be ascribed the *regular* and *undeviating* opposition on his part to the measure devised by the joint council of America for strengthening and confirming the Union? How shall we explain the different and inconsistent grounds of opposition taken at different periods?

To me, my dear sir, the collective view of his conduct will admit of no other supposition than that he has entertained a project for erecting a system of *State Power*, unconnected with, and in subversion of the Union. This is my firm and sincere belief; founded upon a long and close attention to the secret and public proceedings of his excellency. Some of the circumstances which have led to it, I am not at liberty to disclose, because I could not do it without a breach of confidence. Viewing in the light I do the conduct of the Governor, I consider it as a sacred duty which I owe to the country, to advise all those with whom I have any connection or intercourse, to promote a change. It is possible that the Governor, finding the execution of his schemes impracticable, may have abandoned them. But I conceive a man capable of adopting such views as too dangerous to be trusted at the head of the State. And I should hold it to be the extreme of credulity and weakness to confide in any assurances of amendment which his friends, to answer a present purpose, may be induced to give.

With unalterable regard,
I remain yours,
H. G.

To ———, Esq., Suffolk County.

LETTER XVI.

April 9th, 1789.

DEAR SIR:

In mine of the 25th of February last, I observed that there were reasons to conclude that the Governor's conduct immediately after the evacuation of this city, had been influenced by condescensions of those who were at the time advocates for persecution, which in some measure involved him in their policy; and in confirmation of this idea, I mentioned some circum-

tances, as they then presented themselves to my memory, which had attended the suppression of a proclamation issued by the council for the temporary government of the southern district, in consequence of certain irregularities committed in this city by some of the persons alluded to. You have no doubt seen in the newspapers Mr. Willet's statement of this affair, and the correspondence which ensued between that gentleman and myself.

Pursuant to the assurance contained in my letter to Mr. Willet, I shall now disclose to you the result of the inquiries I have made. It has turned out as was to have been apprehended. Neither of the gentlemen to whom I have applied has a distinct recollection of particulars. One of them indeed recollects little more than that he was a good deal displeased with the transaction. The other has a perfect remembrance of some circumstances though not of all. Among other things, he well recollects that he was much *dissatisfied* with the Governor's conduct in the affair, and that the impression which he had at the time was, and *constantly since* has been, that there had been on the part of the Governor an undue and improper acquiescence, at least in the conduct of the person concerned, in suspending the proclamation. But what the facts or appearances were which produced that impression, have now, in a great measure, escaped his memory.*

Thus stands the affair. The investigation has not weakened in my mind the evidence that the circumstances attending the suppression of the proclamation were evincive of *condescensions on the part of the Governor towards the advocates for persecution, at the period in question, which in some measure involved him in their policy.*

This, by reference to my letter, you will perceive was the sole purpose for which the transaction was quoted. I do not insist that the particulars as first stated are accurate. You will observe they are stated with hesitation and uncertainty; but I feel

* Mr. Willet, by applying to the printer, may satisfy himself of the fairness of this representation and of the respectability of the authority on which it is founded.

an entire conviction that the aggregate complexion of the affair was such as I have supposed it to be.

I remain with sincere regard,

Dear Sir,

Your very humble servant,

H. G.

To ——, Esq., Suffolk County.

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC CREDITORS.

BY A FRIEND.

September 1, 1790.

It is probable that many of you are not sufficiently apprised of the advantages of your own situation, and that for want of judging rightly of it, and of your future prospects, you may be tempted to part with your securities much below their true value, and considerably below what it is probable they will sell for in eight or nine months from this time.

To guard you against an unnecessary sacrifice of your interests by a precipitate sale, I will now state to you, in a plain and concise way, what has been done for you in the course of the last session of Congress, and what you may reasonably expect.

EFFECTUAL provision has been made for *actually* paying you six per cent. yearly, on two-thirds of the principal of your debt, that is four per cent. on the whole amount of your principal. And at the end of ten years you are to receive six per cent. yearly, on the remaining third of your principal, that is, two per cent. more on the whole of your principal. And like *effectual* provision has been made for *actually* paying you three per cent. yearly, on whatever arrears of interest may be due to you on your principal. For this interest you are not even to wait to the end of a year, but you are to receive it in quarter-yearly payments, that is to say one-fourth part at the end of every three months; and it is to be paid to you not in new certificates, or paper money,

but in actual gold and silver. To secure this to you, the duties which have been laid on goods imported, and on the tonnage of ships or vessels (and which there is every reason, from the experience we have had, to believe will be sufficient), are absolutely *mortgaged* to you, till the whole of your debt is discharged. You will not have to depend, as under most of the State governments, upon a provision from year to year, with an entire uncertainty whether it would be continued, and with many examples of fickleness and change; but you will have to depend on a permanent provision made once for all, for the sacredness of which the faith, not of a single State, but of all the States, is solemnly bound to you, and which cannot be undone or altered, without the concurrence of three different branches of the government—the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the President of the United States. It cannot be supposed that if one of the two branches of Congress should hereafter be disposed to do so disgraceful and ruinous a thing, as to repeal a law on which the credit of the government was at stake, that the other branch would be willing to concur in so pernicious a measure; or if both should be so unwise and dishonest, that the President of the United States would give his assent to it, or if he assented, that two-thirds of both Houses of Congress would be inclined to persist in spite of his disapprobation. Whoever considers the nature of our government with discernment, will see, that though obstacles and delays will frequently stand in the way of the adoption of good measures, yet, when once adopted, they are likely to be stable and permanent. It will be far more difficult to *undo* than to *do*.

To destroy your confidence in future, there are too many publications, which represent to you that Congress have, by their late proceedings, violated their past engagements, and that you can place no greater reliance upon those they now make than those they have heretofore made. Whether representations like these proceed from a sincere opinion in persons, who have not accurately considered the matter, or from those who wish to depreciate the government, or from those who wish to buy securities cheap, or from all these descriptions of persons, I cannot say; but from whatever source they proceed, they are certainly not candid nor just.

Congress, it is true, submit to your consideration some alterations in the nature of your claims upon the government, for certain equivalents which they hold out to you, and of which you are to judge. A principal object they have in doing this is, to obtain a suspension of the payment of one-third of the interest, to which you are entitled for ten years, in order to avoid the necessity of burthening the community, or carrying the taxation to objects which might be displeasing to them. And you cannot wonder that a government so lately formed, and not without considerable opposition, should be cautious in this respect.

But whether you will accept the terms offered to you is certainly left to your own choice. There is not a syllable in the law that obliges you to do it. On the contrary, there is in it an express ratification of your former contracts; and to remove all possibility of future cavil about the true import or obligation, all questions of discrimination and the like, new titles are offered to you of the like import in substance with your old ones. And your rights are thus established, and their meaning defined, so as to render their future operation, under the sanction of the Constitution, unequivocal. They are not only not violated, but if possible they have received additional strength, and have become still more inviolable.

So far is there from being any thing compulsory, in the acts of the government in the case, that those of you, who do not choose to subscribe to the new terms, are to receive during the time allotted for determining upon them, exactly as much as those who do subscribe. And the faith of the government remains pledged to you to fulfil its engagements, which must be performed, as fast as its resources can be brought into action for the purpose. Your only security before the late arrangement was the faith of government. There were no funds pledged to you which have been taken away. You have still the faith of government upon a renewed assurance as your pledge, and while you are deliberating on the new proposals you are to receive a payment on account.

You are therefore to decide according to your own judgment, whether an acceptance of the new terms, under all their circum-

stances, are preferable or not to a dependence on the future resources of the country for more. This is a question of prudent calculation, which you are at liberty to determine as you please.

Whence it is evident, that whatever other objections may be against the propriety of the provision which has been made, for the public debt, the charge of a breach of contract is not well founded.

The better to form a comparison between the terms proposed, and those of your former contract, it may be well to recollect that the latter will be satisfied by a provision, *annually* made, for paying you six per cent. Whatever the policy of the government may hereafter dictate, there is nothing in the existing contract that calls for a *permanent appropriation* of funds. Such a *permanent appropriation*, however, forms a part of the new loans, and will be of the essence of the new contract.

These remarks are intended to satisfy you, that there is no cause, from any thing that has happened, for a diminution, but on the contrary much reason for an increase of your confidence in the property you possess, as holders of the public debt.

I return to the subject of the value of your securities. Their present price, if compared with that at which they were current before the establishment of the new Constitution, will be deemed to be *high*, and is as great as at this time could reasonably have been expected; but compared with their true value, and the solidity of the footing on which they stand, is still far too low. The rise which has already taken place is an earnest to you of their probable future rise. Such of you who do not incline to be permanent holders, will at least do well to postpone a sale till after March, when the first payment of interest is to be made. The effect of this on the price of securities must undoubtedly be very favorable, and you may then calculate on a better market.

The holders of State securities have still stronger reasons for keeping those they have, the price of which, in most of the States, is out of all proportion lower than that of the present securities of the United States, and must, in all probability, undergo a considerable change for the better, as soon as funds are

actually appropriated for them, which is not now the case, but which must of course be so at the ensuing session of December. The present debt of the United States having been provided for out of the duties on imposts and tonnage only, seems to leave no doubt of the facility of devising the means of providing for the amount which has been assumed of the State debts.

VINDICATION OF THE FUNDING SYSTEM.

NUMBER ONE.

1 1.

It was to have been foreseen, that though the virtuous part of those who were opposed to the present Constitution of the United States, while in deliberation before the people, would yield to the evidence which experience would afford of its usefulness and safety, there were, of a certain character, opponents who, as happens in all great political questions, would always remain incurably hostile to it; that in the course of its administration, its greatest merits would be in the eyes of such men its greatest blemishes, its most brilliant successes to them occasions of bitter chagrin and envious detraction; its slightest mismanagements subjects of malignant exaggeration; its most trivial misfortunes the welcome topics of virulent accusation and insidious misrepresentation.

With some men, the hardest thing to forgive is the demonstration of their errors, the manifestation that they are not infallible. Mortified vanity is one of the most corroding emotions of the human mind; one of the most unextinguishable sources of animosity and hatred.

It was equally to have been foreseen, that personal disappointments would be likely to alienate from the government some individuals who had at first advocated its adoption, perhaps from motives not the most patriotic or commendable,—that personal rivalships and competitions would throw others into an op-

position to its measures, without much regard to their intrinsic merits or demerits, and that a third class would embrace the path of opposition as the supposed road to popularity and preferment; raising upon every colorable pretext the cry of danger to liberty; endeavoring to disseminate among the people false terrors and ill-grounded alarms.

Phenomena like these have deformed the political horizon, and testified the depravity of mankind in all countries and at all times.

It was likewise to have been expected among the well-meaning friends of the government, there would be a part competent to the proper management of the affairs of the Union, who, sensible from experience of the insufficiency of the former system, gave their assent to the substitute offered to their choice, rather from general impressions of the necessity of a change, than from an accurate view of the necessary compass of the authorities which ought to constitute it.

When they came to witness the exercise of those authorities upon a scale more comprehensive than they had contemplated, and to hear the incendiary comments of those who will ever be on the watch for pretexts to brand the proceedings of the government with imputations of usurpation and tyranny; and the factious and indiscreet clamors of those who, in and out of the legislature, with too much levity, torture the Constitution into objections to measures which they deem inexpedient;—it was to have been expected, I say, that some such men might be carried away by transient anxieties and apprehensions, and might for a moment add weight to an opposition which could not fail to grow out of other causes, and the real objects of which they would abhor.

There is yet another class of men, who, in all the stages of our republican system, either from desperate circumstances, or irregular ambition, or a mixture of both, will labor incessantly to keep the government in a troubled and unsettled state; to sow disquietudes in the minds of the people, and to promote confusion and change. Every republic at all times has its Catilines and its Cæsars.

Men of this stamp, while in their hearts they scoff at the

principles of liberty, while in their real characters they are arbitrary, persecuting, and intolerant, are in all their harangues and professions the most zealous; nay, if they are to be believed, the only friends to liberty. Mercenary and corrupt themselves, they are continually making a parade of their purity and disinterestedness, and heaping upon others charges of peculation and corruption. Extravagant and dissipated in their own affairs, they are always prating about public economy, and railing at the government for its pretended profusion. Conscious that as long as the confidence of the people shall be maintained in their tried and faithful servants, in men of real integrity and patriotism, their ambitious projects can never succeed, they leave no artifice unessayed, they spare no pains to destroy that confidence, and blacken the characters that stand in their way.

Convinced that as long as order and system in the public affairs can be maintained, their schemes can never be realized, they are constantly representing the means of that order and system as chains forged for the people. Themselves the only plotters and conspirators, they are for ever spreading tales of plots and conspiracies; always talking of the republican cause, and meaning nothing but the cause of themselves and their party; virtue and liberty constantly on their lips, fraud, usurpation, and tyranny in their hearts.

There is yet another class of opponents to the government and its administration, who are of too much consequence not to be mentioned; a sect of political doctors; a kind of POPES in government; standards of political orthodoxy, who brand with heresy all opinions but their own; men of sublimated imaginations and weak judgments; pretenders to profound knowledge, yet ignorant of the most useful of all sciences—the science of human nature; men who dignify themselves with the appellation of philosophers, yet are destitute of the first elements of true philosophy; lovers of paradoxes; men who maintain expressly that religion is not necessary to society, and very nearly that government itself is a nuisance; that priests and clergymen of all descriptions are worse than useless. Such men, the ridicule of any cause that they espouse, and the best witnesses to the good-

ness of that which they oppose, have no small share in the clamors which are raised, and in the dissatisfactions which are excited.

While the real object of these clamors, with the persons most active in propagating them, is opposition to the administration of it; while they are straining every nerve to render it odious, they are profuse in their professions of attachment to it. To oppose avowedly the *work of the people* would be too barefaced. It would not accord with that system of treacherous flattery, which is the usual engine of these pretended "friends," but real betrayers of the people.

Circumstances require that the mode of attack be changed. The government is to be good, if not excellent, but its administration is to be execrable,—detestable,—a mere sink of corruption; a deep-laid plan to overturn the republican system of the country.

Suspicions of the most flagitious prostitution and corruption in office; of improper connections with brokers and speculators to fleece the commmunity; of the horrid depravity of promoting wars, and the shedding of human blood, for the sake of sharing collusively the emoluments of lucrative contracts; suspicions like these, are, if possible, to be thrown upon men, the whole tenor of whose lives gives the lie to them; who, before they came into office, were never either *land*-jobbers, or stock-jobbers, or jobbers of any other kind; who can appeal to their fellow-citizens of every other party and description to attest, that their reputations for probity are unsullied; that their conduct in all pecuniary concerns has been nicely correct, and even exemplarily disinterested; who, it is notorious, have sacrified, and are sacrificing the interests of their families to their public zeal; who, whenever the necessity of resisting the machinations of the enemies of the public quiet will permit them to retire, will retire poorer than they came into office, and will have to resume under numerous disadvantages the pursuits which they before followed under every advantage. Shame, where is thy blush? If detraction so malignant as this can affront the public ear, Integrity, where is thy shield—where thy reward—if the poisonous breath

of an unprincipled cabal can pollute thy good name which thou incessantly toiled to deserve.

People of America, can ye be deceived by arts like these? Will ye suffer yourselves to be cheated out of your confidence in men who deserve it most? Will ye be the dupes of hypocritical pretenders?

Think for yourselves. Look around you. Consult your own experience. If any of you have doubts, listen calmly and dispassionately to the arguments and facts which, in the course of the following numbers, shall be opposed to the suggestions which would persuade you that the administration of your government has been in the aggregate weak or wicked, or both.

NUMBER TWO.

Of all the measures of the government, that which has been most bitterly inveighed against is the Funding System, contained in the act making provision for the debt of the United States. As well for this reason, as on account of its superior importance, the objections which have been made to it are entitled to an examination in the first place.

It is a curious phenomenon in political history (not easy to be paralleled), that a measure which has elevated the credit of the country from a state of absolute prostration to a state of exalted pre-eminence, should bring upon the authors of it obloquy and reproach.

It is certainly what, in the ordinary course of human affairs, they could not have anticipated. They are not here chargeable with arrogance, if they indulged from it the hope of credit and applause; and if the clamors which have been raised have truly proceeded, as the clamorers assure us, from patriotic motives, it must be confessed that they have the additional merit of novelty and singularity.

There must be something original in the passions as well as

in the ideas of the sect to which they are attributable. It will be hardly possible not to believe, that some mysterious work of political regeneration has begun to make its way in the world, and that all those who have not been the subjects of it are in a state of pitiable darkness and error.

The two first points which, in considering the funding system, present themselves to attention, are the *existence* and the *composition* of the debt funded.

A person who, unacquainted with the fact, should learn the history of our debt from the declamations with which certain newspapers are perpetually charged, would be led to suppose, that it is the mere creature of the *present* government for the purpose of burthening the people with taxes, and producing an artificial and corrupt influence over them; he would, at least, take it for granted, that it had been contracted in the pursuit of some [illegible]on or vain project of ambition or glory; he would scarcely be able to conceive, that every part of it was the relict of a war which had given independence, and preserved liberty to the country; that the present government found it as it is, in point of magnitude (except as to the diminutions made by itself), and has done nothing more than to bring under a regular regimen and provision what was before a scattered and heterogeneous mass.

And yet this is the simple and exact state of the business. The whole of the debt embraced by the provisions of the funding system consisted of the unextinguished principal and arrears of interest of the debt which had been contracted by the United States in the course of the late war with Great Britain, and which remained uncancelled, and the principal and arrears of interest of the separate debts of the respective States contracted during the same period, which remained *outstanding and unsatisfied, relating to services and supplies for carrying on the war.* Nothing more was done by that system, than to incorporate these two species of debt into the mass, and to make for the whole one general, comprehensive provision.

There is, therefore, no arithmetic, no logic, by which it can be shown that the funding system has augmented the aggregate

debt of the country. The sum total is manifestly the same; though the parts which were before divided are now united.

There is, consequently, no color for an assertion, that the system in question either created any *new* debt, or made any addition to the *old.*

And it follows, that the collective burthen upon the people of the United States must have been as great *without* as *with* the union of the different portions and descriptions of the debt. The only difference can be, that without it that burthen would have been otherwise distributed, and would have fallen with unequal weight, instead of being equally borne as it now is.

These conclusions which have been drawn respecting the non-increase of the debt, proceed upon the presumption that every part of the public debt, as well that of the States individually as that of the United States, was to have been honestly paid.

If there is any fallacy in this supposition, the inferences may be erroneous, but the error would imply the disgrace of the United States, or parts of them—a disgrace from which every man of true honor and genuine patriotism will be happy to see them rescued.

When we hear the epithets, "vile matter," "corrupt mass," bestowed upon the public debt, and the owners of it indiscriminately maligned as the harpies and vultures of the community, there is ground to suspect that those who hold the language, though they may not dare to avow it, contemplate a more summary process for getting rid of debts than that of paying them. Charity itself cannot avoid concluding from the language and conduct of some men (and some of them of no inconsiderable importance), that in their vocabularies *creditor* and *enemy* are synonymous terms, and that they have a laudable antipathy against every man to whom they owe money, either as individuals or as members of the society.

It has been said, that the sum of the debt to be ultimately provided for has been artificially increased by the plan for the settlement of accounts between the United States and individual States. This point will most properly be the subject of a distinct examination, as the act which settles the accounts is a dis-

tinct one from that which establishes the funding system. It will appear, upon examination, that there is no foundation for the assertion, and, moreover, that the plan which has been adopted by the present government for the settlement of the accounts is essentially a recapitulation of that which was adopted under the confederation, and which established principles which were not only equitable in themselves, but could not have been reversed without an infraction of the public faith.

NUMBER THREE.

My last number contained a concise and simple statement of facts tending to show, that the public debt was neither created nor increased by the funding system, and, consequently, that it is not responsible either for the existence or the magnitude of the debt.

It will be proper next to examine the allegations which have been made of a contrary tendency.

In the first place, it is asserted, that the debt is greater than it ought to be, because, from the state of depreciation in which the government found it, a much less provision for it than that which was made might have sufficed. A saving of nearly one-half, it is said, might have been made by providing for it in the hands of alienees, at least at 8s. or 10s. in the pound, who, having come by it at a much less rate, would have been well compensated by such a provision.

To a man who entertains correct notions of public faith, and who feels as he ought to feel for the reputation and dignity of the country, it is mortifying to reflect that there are partisans enough of such a doctrine to render it worth the while to combat it. It is still more mortifying to know that in that class are comprehended some men who are in other respects sober-minded and upright, friends to order, and strenuous advocates for the rights of property.

In reasoning upon all subjects, it is necessary to take, as a point of departure, some principle in which reasonable and sound minds will agree. Without this there can be no argument, no conclusion, in moral or political more than in physical or mathematical disquisitions.

The principle which shall be assumed here is this, that the established *rules of morality and justice are applicable to nations as well as to individuals;* that the *former* as well as the *latter* are bound *to keep their promises; to fulfil their engagements to respect the rights of property* which others have acquired under contracts with them. Without this there is an end of all distinct ideas of right or wrong, justice or injustice, in relation to society or government. There can be no such thing as rights, no such thing as property or liberty; all the boasted advantages of a constitution of government vanish into air. Every thing must float on the variable and vague opinions of the governing party, of whomsoever composed.

To this it may be answered, that the doctrine, as a general one, is true, but that there are certain great cases which operate as exceptions to the rule, and in which the public good may demand and justify a departure from it.

It shall not be denied that there are such cases; but as the admission of them is one of the most common as well as the most fruitful sources of error and abuse, it is of the greatest importance that just ideas should be formed of their true nature, foundation and extent. To minds which are either depraved or feeble, or under the influence of any particular passion or prejudice, it is enough that cases are only attended with some *extraordinary circumstances* to induce their being considered as among the exceptions. *Convenience* is with them a substitute for *necessity*, and some temporary, partial advantage is an equivalent for a fundamental and permanent interest of society. We have too often seen in the United States examples of this species of levity. The treaties of the United States, the sacred rights of private property, have been too frequently sported with, from a too great facility in admitting exceptions to the maxims of public faith and the general rules of property. A desire to escape from this evil was a

principal cause of the union which took place among good men to establish the national government; and it behoved its friends to have been particularly cautious how they set an example of equal relaxation in the practice of that very government.

The characteristics of the only admissible exceptions to the principle that has been assumed, are—1st. NECESSITY. 2d. There being some intrinsic and inherent quality in the thing which is to constitute the exception, contrary to the social order and to the permanent good of society.

Necessity is admitted in all moral reasoning as an exception to general rules. It is of two kinds, as applied to nations—where there is want of ability to perform a duty, and then it is involuntary; and where the general rule cannot be observed without some *manifest* and *great* national calamity.

If from extraordinary circumstances a nation is disabled from performing its stipulations, or its duty in any other respect, it is then excusable on the score of inability. But the inability must be a real, not a pretended one; one that has been experimentally ascertained, or that can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of all honest and discerning men. And the deviation ought to be as small as possible; all that is practicable ought to be done.

A nation is alike excusable in certain extraordinary cases for not observing a right in performing a duty, if the one or the other would involve a *manifest* and *great* national calamity. But here, also, an extreme case is intended; the calamity to be avoided must not only be evident and considerable—it must be such an one as is like to prove fatal to the nation, as threatens its existence, or at least its permanent welfare.

War, for instance, is almost always a national calamity, of a serious kind; but it ought often to be encountered in protection *even* of a *part* of the community injured or annoyed; or in performance of the condition of a defensive alliance with some other nation.

But if such special circumstances exist in either case, that the going to war would eminently endanger the existence or permanent welfare of the nation, it may excusably be forborne.

Of the second class of exceptions, the case of certain foedal rights, which once oppressed all Europe, and still oppress too great a part of it, may serve as an example; rights which made absolute slaves of a part of the community, and rendered the condition of the greatest proportion of the remainder not much more eligible.

These rights, though involving that of property, being contrary to the social order, and to the permanent welfare of society, were justifiably abolished in the instances, in which abolitions have taken place, and may be abolished in all the remaining vestiges.

Wherever, indeed, a right of property is infringed for the general good, if the nature of the case admits of compensation, it ought to be made; but if compensation be impracticable, that impracticability ought not to be an obstacle to a clearly essential reform.

In what has been said, the cases of exception have been laid down as broad as they ought to be. They are cases of extremity—where there is a palpable necessity—where some great and permanent national evil is to be avoided—where some great and permanent national good is to be obtained. It must not be to avoid a temporary burthen or inconvenience—to get rid of a particular, though a considerable evil, or to secure a partial advantage. A relaxation of this kind would tend to dissolve all social obligations—to render all rights precarious, and to introduce a general dissoluteness and corruption of morals.

A single glance will suffice to convince that the case of the debt of the United States was not one of those cases which could justify a clear infraction of the fundamental rules of good faith, and a clear invasion of rights of property acquired under the most unequivocal national stipulations.

If there was any doubt before, the real facility with which a provision for the debt has been made removes it, a provision which touches no internal source of revenue but the single article of distilled spirits, and lays upon that a very moderate duty.

But a history of the real state of the debt when it was taken

up by the government will put the matter out of all doubt. This shall constitute the subject of my next number.

NUMBER FOUR.

The debt proper, or the original debt of the United States, in its primary sense, may be classed under four general heads; 1st, the old emissions of Continental money; 2d, the Loan Office debt, contracted for moneys lent to the government; 3d, the Army debt, contracted for the pay and commutation of the army; 4th, the debt of the five great Departments, as they are called in the resolution of Congress, being for services and supplies in the Marine Department, the Quartermaster's, Commissary's, Clothing, and Hospital Departments.

Emanations from these were the registered debt, so denominated from new kinds of certificates issued by the Register of the Treasury in lieu of the former evidences. Indents of interest being a species of paper payable to bearer, which, by different resolutions of Congress, were issued on account of arrears of interest on the old debt. The new emission money is not added to the enumeration, because it was issued upon funds of the respective States, with only a guarantee of the United States, and falls, perhaps, most properly, in the class of State debts.

Of this original debt, it appears by a statement of the Register of the Treasury, published in not less than in its first concoction, belonged to citizens of the States from Pennsylvania to New Hampshire inclusively; the remaining belonging to States from Maryland to Georgia inclusively, in nearly the following proportions:

to Maryland, to Virginia, to North Carolina, to South Carolina, to Georgia, The reasons of this state of things are obvious. Until the the principal theatre of the war had been in the States from Pennsylvania north; and after

that period, to the close of it, the principal part of the enemy's force remained stationary at New-York, which obliged to the keeping up in the same quarter large bodies of troops till the termination of the war.

The natural consequence of this state of things was, that a very large proportion of the means for carrying on the war—men, money, and other supplies—were drawn from the States comprehended in the first division. They indeed possessed greater comparative resources than the more southern States, and with only the same degree of zeal could furnish more to the common cause. Obvious causes always conspire to occasion larger aids to be drawn from the vicinity of the war than from more distant parts of the country, and the main dependence of the United States being credit, a large debt was created in the scene from which the principal supplies came.

The use of this statement of the original distribution of the debt will appear hereafter.

A leading character of every part of the debt is, that it was in its origin made alienable. It was payable to the *holder*, either in capacity of assignee or bearer, far the greatest part of the latter description. The contract, therefore, was, in its very *issue*, a contract between the government and the actual holder.

A considerable part of the debt was consequently alienated by the first proprietors at different periods, from its commencement down to the time of passing the funding act.

But this has been much exaggerated, both as to the quantity alienated and as to the rates of alienation. The declamations on the subject have constantly represented far the greatest part of the debt in the hands of alienees, and have taken the lowest price at which it ever was in the market as the common standard of the alienation. The changes have been rung upon two shillings and sixpence in the pound, in all the arguments which have advocated a violation of the rights of the alienees.

Neither the first nor the last supposition is true. As to the first point, namely, the quantity of the debt alienated, there are no documents by which it can be satisfactorily ascertained, which o course give full scope to imagination.

But there is an important fact which affords strong evidence that the quantity has always been much less considerable than has been supposed.

In the year the State of New-York passed a law permitting the holders of Continental securities, to bring them in and receive in exchange for them State securities upon certain conditions, which were generally deemed for the advantage of the holders to accept. The same arrangement embraced an exchange of old State securities for new.

In the event of this exchange, which was completed by the , it appeared that about of the debt remained in the hands of the original proprietors.

Alienations after this period. * * * * *

It may be stated as a fact, that there always has prevailed in the States north of New-York, a more firm confidence in an eventual provision for the debt than existed in that State; and it may be inferred that the alienation was still less in those States than in the State of New-York.

In Jersey and Pennsylvania, it is probable that the alienations were not more considerable in their degree than in New-York. In Maryland they may be supposed to have been still less, on account of that State having made a better provision for its debt than any other, and having included in it Continental securities in the hands of its own citizens by an exchange of certificates.

It is probable from information, though not certainly known, that a more considerable alienation in proportion had taken place in the States south of Maryland. But making all due allowance for this, and taking into the account that the principal part of the debt was originally owned from Pennsylvania north, the probability still is, that the progress of alienation has been much less rapid than has been conjectured. Nothing is more natural than a mistake on this point. The dealers in the debt in the principal cities, appeared to be continually engaged in buying and selling large sums; and it has not been their fault generally, to underrate the extent of their dealings. Thence it came to be imagined that the whole debt, or the greatest part of it, was in the market;

whereas a small sum comparatively was sufficient to satisfy all the appearances. Bandied incessantly from hand to hand, a few hundred thousand dollars appeared like as many millions.

The best inquiries on the subject will lead to an opinion that there never was, prior to the funding system, three millions of dollars of floating debt in all the great stock markets of the United States. And the whole sum which had been acquired by foreigners, was about ——. From all which it is very questionable whether one-third of the debt in the hands of alienees at the time when Congress began to deliberate concerning a provision for it would not be an ample allowance.

With regard to the terms of alienation, they have varied from 20*s.* down to 2*s.* 6*d.* in the pound.

There are several considerable classes of alienees, who hold the debt at full or high values:

I. Those who advanced moneys, or furnished supplies to public officers upon loan-office certificates, issued to those officers in their own names. An example of this exists in the cases of purchases made during the war by public officers. Warrants from the Treasury would frequently be drawn in their favor upon the commissioners of loans, who would often furnish loan office certificates in their own names in payment of those warrants. For these certificates the officers would sometimes procure the current paper in exchange, and would transfer the certificates to those who advanced the money. In other cases they would pay for supplies in the certificates themselves, which they would in like manner transfer. This is a very extensive case.

II. Those whose money has been placed in the funds by trustees or agents, who took out certificates in their own names, and afterwards assigned them to the true proprietors.

An instance of this was mentioned in the debates in Congress on the subject of a discrimination between original and present holders, and can be ascertained by any one who will take the pains to inquire. It was that of a Mr. Caldwell, a respectable clergyman and zealous patriot in New Jersey, who acted for some time during the war in the capacity of deputy quarter-master. In that capacity he frequently had money to pay to individuals,

which, at their desire, he would place in the loan-office for them, take certificates in his own name, and afterwards transfer them to the persons whose money he had deposited. There are likewise instances, not a few, of trustees and agents for absent persons and minors, who placed the moneys of those whom they represented in the loan-offices, took out certificates in their own names, and afterwards transferred them to the parties entitled.

III. Those who, by laws of particular States, were compelled to take certificates at the full value in payment of debts.

A law of the State of New-York passed in the year obliged all persons who had resided within the British lines during the war, to receive, in satisfaction of their debts from those who had been without the lines, certificates.

IV. Those who, at different periods, voluntarily received certificates in payment of debts. This, in some States, is a very extensive case. From the precarious situation in which all persons were placed by the revolution, whose property was merely personal, it was no uncommon thing for creditors to receive from their debtors certificates in payment of debts; and this was almost always at high values.

Even since the peace, compromises between creditors and debtors, especially those whose fortunes had been injured by the war, in which certificates were received at full value.—*Cætera desunt.*

For the Federal Gazette.

1792.

Russell, under an affected moderation, veils the most insidious and malignant designs, and slyly propagates the basest slanders. This is evident from the following passage of his second paper. After stating a visionary and impracticable scheme for avoiding a war with the Indians, he proceeds thus—"But, then, how many officers had been wanting, how *many* lucrative contracts would have been lost, and how great a waste of money

would have been prevented from flowing into the coffers of those concerned in this business?"

The plain inference from this is, that the public officer who has an agency in making those contracts *shares in the profit of them*, and that a part of the money which is expended *flows into his coffers*. If this is not his meaning, then Russell owes it to himself and to justice to disavow the inference. If it is his meaning, then he owes it to the public to answer the following questions:—

Does he know by what public officer the contracts for supplying the army are made? Has he any ground to believe that that officer ever advised a single step which has led to the present Indian war? Does he know what his official conduct has been with regard to it? Does he know what his private character has been as to pecuniary affairs? Is he acquainted with a single *fact*, or even *circumstance*, which can justify a suspicion that he has even been directly or indirectly interested in any contract in which he has had an agency?

Let him answer these questions, or otherwise assign the grounds of his insinuation, or let him be despised as a wanton calumniator.

ANTI-DEFAMER.

END OF VOL. VI.

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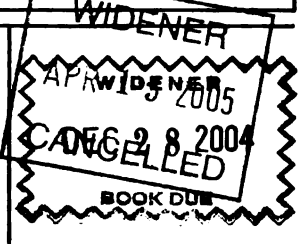

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